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## THE CONTINUITY OF CATHOLIC LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>

### I

A SCULPTOR looks at a piece of stone and perhaps quite suddenly, quite unexpectedly, he sees the form that he will carve. From then on his work, as it were, is a kind of tracing. So also with the poet or novelist. A piece of experience suddenly falls into a shape or pattern, and from then on the work is largely a matter of copying. An artist should always be ready to drop on his knees to receive his gift. Now I believe that something similar happens with the critic—to be more precise here, the literary critic. For he looks at an author, an epoch or a period and then perhaps quite unexpectedly, quite suddenly, a word or a phrase echoes in his mind and he knows that the time has come for him to make an incision. Here, he soliloquizes, is my starting-point. Sometimes this process is dismissed as pure chance; I prefer to believe that in life nothing is ever quite fortuitous. Ultimately, all ways to the centre prove equally short, just as ultimately God is to be found in all things—a circle, it might seem, that contains and unites all the radii. "I saw God in a point . . . by which sight I saw that He is in all things," said Dame Julian of Norwich, the fourteenth-century mediaeval mystic. Or, as she put her meaning more allegorically in her *Divine Revelations*: "[God] showed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazel nut, lying in the palm of the hand . . . and it was as round as a ball. I thought, 'What may this be?' and it was answered thus 'It is all that is made'."

So let me return to my main point, the centre of my argument. When I was planning this paper I had just finished reading the autobiography of the Jesuit recusant, William Weston. Two years ago I had read the John Gerard autobiography of roughly the same dates—and suddenly there came

<sup>1</sup> The text of a paper delivered to the North-Western Polytechnic, Kentish Town, at the end of 1955.

to me the idea that by making an incision in the 1590s I had not only a division between what is commonly called mediaeval and Catholic literature, but I had authors who, representing the width, diversity—in a word, catholicity—of Catholicism provided also an admirable point from which both to look forward and back; and like any author of staying power, these two writers remain extraordinarily contemporary. To think of Paleolithic Man, Stonehenge or the megaliths at Carnac is to realize that a thousand years of literary history go for little in comparison. It is a humbling experience to remember for the critic who risks looking at history in the sweep!

For example, when the curtain rises on a modern stage drawing-room and a maid walks down centre to answer a telephone on the left, there is possibly an unconscious repetition of the server at Mass when he crosses the altar preparatory to ringing the bell at the Consecration. After all, the drama did stem out of the mediaeval Catholic Church—as witness the dramatic responses that echo all through the Mass. Priest: *Dominus Vobiscum*. Server: *Et Cum Spiritu Tuo* (The Lord Be With You. And With Thy Spirit). Or, for instance, in the Passion of Christ which is read on Good Friday, when three pitches of voice are used by the three cantors: a high pitch for Pilate, the rabbis and the crowd; a middle pitch for the narrative; a deep pitch for the words of Christ. So from the general to the particular. First, listen to the stress and anti-stress in the general speech of the Mass—*Dominus Vobiscum* . . . *Et Cum Spiritu Tuo*. . . . As in any good dramatic dialogue, the rhythm of statement and response can be caught; and the essence of high comedy, which is principally made up of repartee, is largely a polishing or sharpening of the statements and responses of ordinary speech. Now think how easily in particular Christmas, Good Friday and Easter led from a vocal enactment of their Gospels in the sanctuary to their pictorial realization on the steps of the church. These are the first Mystery Plays. Still how much more manageable is a platform on wheels, with trap-doors for devils to descend into as well as for Christ to rise from on the Third Day. So again, as the range widens and the platform leaves the portals of the church for the market-square, there is a blending of religious and secular drama. In short,

these are the first Miracle Plays and famous Moralities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By the time of Weston and Gerard, of course, there is the Elizabethan theatre, the forerunner of the eighteenth-century playhouse with its picture-frame stage of today. . . .

Already, by example of the drama, here is another way by which I might have approached my subject, as indeed there are probably at least a dozen others. Yet for every critic there can be only one particular approach which will be particularly right at the necessary given moment. Let me explain. Criticism—as opposed to flag-waving, whatever the colours, Protestant, Communist or Catholic—such criticism if it is to be worth anything must deal with that subconscious part of the mind of an author which only the critic, not the author, can fully express or interpret. Otherwise it were better to keep silent and simply quote. I could in this paper have strung a catalogue of names together alphabetically, or, alternatively, I could have listed writers who happened to be Catholics, century by century. Instead I have tried to relate the present to the past, to leave the encyclopaedias upon their shelves and show, half way through the twentieth century, what contribution Catholicism has made to English literature. To use a well-worn critical *cliché*, what has been the “continuity of spirit” these last thousand years? For, remember, although Dryden may not have intended writing satire like that of Alfred Douglas or Roy Campbell, neither Douglas nor Campbell could have written as they have, had it not been for Dryden; every writer of staying power inevitably adds to the past as well as preparing the way for the future. So if this paper has a slight psychological bias that is because day by day modern fiction, drama and poetry are making men aware of the subconscious. When I said that a critic must deal with that part of the subconscious mind of an author which only the critic, not the author, can fully express, I meant also that a critic must risk saying those things of his authors which, if they heard him, might make them sit bolt upright in their graves. Like any creative writer, a critic who seeks to interpret must at certain levels of his work always ask for danger money. A hundred years hence, a man discussing the same subject as I would naturally re-orientate his approach;

there would probably be biases other than a psychological one. Yet the same encyclopaedias, with their alphabetical catalogues and their chronological lists, but with appendices added for the twentieth century, would still remain.

Take William Weston first. Here is a saintly man, carrying on the practice of his Catholic religion against great odds, always giving everybody the benefit of the doubt—even the informer. For perhaps one day, too, the informer will discover that he has a soul to save and so turn to repentance. The Nazi, the Fascist, *agent-provocateur* or informer are not new types. There are plenty of them in the Bible, and Christ never feared to speak either *to* or *about* them. Weston as a disciple knew and loved his Master well. Not caring a jot for personal safety, he served those houses of Elizabethan England where the old religion lingered and Mass and the sacraments were still sought. One day, so he records, Francis Wodehouse, a sincere but weak and humanly frail Catholic, decides to rig his conscience. "My wife, my children, my whole family and fortune were concerned." Besides, if it will make things easier for them all, what is against—just this once—attending a Protestant service? He does so—and no sooner is he seated with the congregation than it seems to him as if his bowels are alight. "A fire seemed to kindle in them and in a few moments flared up. . . . The flame rose right in my chest and the region of my heart, so that I seemed to be steaming and boiling in some hellish furnace." So, afflicted with a searing thirst, he waited until the service was over, rushed to a tavern and downed a jug of ale; then another; and another; and another. . . . And all to no purpose. The heat did not abate. So he confessed all to his wife, and she in turn called a priest who helped to restore her husband's "former good health after his soul's recent distemper". Finally Wodehouse went to the Protestant Bishop and explained all that had happened. He was clapped into jail for four years.

Now in 1875 when Father John Morris, a Jesuit, was entrusted with the editing of this autobiography, he omitted this scene; it smelt too much of religious hysteria. Yet today, a new editor, Father Philip Caraman of the same Order, can print it—nay even draw attention to it. For as Dr E. B. Strauss comments in a footnote appended: "This is a most interesting



example of the way the unconscious conscience—the super ego of the Freudian schema—can produce severe bodily symptoms by way of self-punishment.” The point of course is that in 1875, towards the end of Queen Victoria’s reign, so little was known about psychology that the Catholic minority might have mistaken the supernatural for the natural, seen the incident as the direct interference of God as opposed merely to the mind’s revenge on the body for having played it false.

So, in what seems a quiet but not uneventful autobiography (the American publishers call the book *An Autobiography from the Jesuit Underground*), there lives in Weston one type of Catholicism. In a sense, it recurs again in some of Graham Greene’s characters—this persistence, almost obsession, with the problem of loyalties. If I bring you the sacraments in your house, “the pearls of great price”, may I not bring disfavour upon your wife, children, whole family and fortune? If I make converts, may I not really be their executioner—the cause of their later hanging from the Tyburn Tree? There is a sort of see-saw movement about the dilemmas and arguments of this saintly, liberal-minded Jesuit.

In contrast, with John Gerard there lives more of the school-boy commando type—a type not far removed from some of Evelyn Waugh’s heroes. There is a favouritism in the Gerard apostolate towards the aristocracy, the great estates and the large houses—though, to be scrupulously fair, this was simply because it was easier to operate successfully through such homes. The autobiography is not nearly so introspective as Weston’s, but it is tremendously exciting—like E. F. Benson or John Buchan. Here is an extract from the second chapter:

For a few moments we prayed and commended ourselves to the keeping of God, then we looked about for a path and put a good distance between us and the sea before dawn broke. But the night was dark and overcast, and we could not pick the path we wanted and get into the open fields. Every track we took led up to a house—as we knew at once when the dogs started to bark. This happened two or three times. Afraid we might wake the people inside and be set on for attempting to burgle them, we decided to be off into a nearby wood and rest there till morning. It was about the end of October, raining and wet, and

we passed a sleepless night. Nor did we dare to talk, for the wood was close to the house. However, in little more than a whisper we held conference. Would it be better to make for London together or separate so that if one of us was caught the other might get away safely? We discussed both courses thoroughly. In the end we decided to part company and each go his separate way. . . .

This is straightforward story-telling—an exact recalling and recountal of what occurred. It is narrative in the direct descent of the mediaeval oral tradition—the tradition kept to in William Langland or such religious treatises as, say, *The Rule of Anchoresses* (1230).

In this manual for anchoresses everything is eminently practical. A nun keeps a cow and the cow strays; the nun pursues the cow, the cow trespasses and so the nun is threatened with a fine; she loses her temper, swears and then has to beseech and implore the heyward beadle of her parish to forgive her. So in the end she has to pay the original fine—the moral of which is that a nun should keep a cat. Indeed much of this little book is filled with the rules of conventional morality mixed with a certain amount of religious instruction—like the *Miracle Plays* and *Moralities*. Sophistication so far as it goes is limited to alliteration or a play on words. Gerard is obviously in this tradition when he puns: “[This informer] was faithful but only to men who did not know the word faith.” Yet this was only one tradition. For, by Elizabethan times, it was quite apparent that another more reflective and subtler tradition had developed—the legacy of spiritual writers such as the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and, say, Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*. Here is an anonymous thirteenth- or fourteenth-century author describing the break-down—literally the breaking down—of the soul before it can reach through the cloud of unknowing to true union with God:

And therefore break down all knowing and feeling of manner of creatures; but most busily of thyself. For on the knowing and the feeling of thyself hangeth the knowing and feeling of all other creatures; for in regard of it, all other creatures be lightly forgotten. For, if thou wilt busily set thee to the proof, thou shalt

find, when thou hast forgotten all other creatures and all their works—yea! and also thine own works—that there shall remain after, betwixt thee and thy God, a naked knowing and a feeling of thine own being: the which being and feeling must always be destroyed, ere the time be that thou mayest feel verily the perefecion of this work.

Roughly a century later, one can see in what tradition William Weston is writing, when he notes: "Prisons are full of priests, but God's word is not in chains. In the midst of tribulation, sorrow and weariness our mother Jerusalem is not sterile, and ceases not to bear her children." The language has more edge, imagery is beginning to take the place of allegory—as indeed it was in poetry.

Whereas Langland in *Piers Plowman* could paraphrase the Active Life in the Character of Do-Well (i.e. Keep the Commandments), the Contemplative Life in Do-Better (i.e. Sell all you have and give to the Poor), and the Mystical Life in Do-Best (i.e. Come, follow Me), Chaucer lived in the spring of a Renaissance Europe; unlike Langland, he had never known the simplicities of mediaeval life before the Black Plague and again, in contrast with Langland, he was by birth well-to-do and by nature slightly inclined towards a natural scepticism. He knew, because he saw, the abuses to which religion could be put—the pardons, the indulgences and fake relics that could be sold to the simple or unsuspecting. I have often wondered if he had not *The Rule of Anchoresses* in mind and the memory of the incident of the nun, cow and the cat when he wrote of his own Prioress, Madam Eglentyne, in the Prologue to his *Canterbury Tales*:

She was so charitable and so pitious  
 She would weep, if that she saw a mouse  
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled . . .

There is a sort of gentle irony here. The Religious Orders had grown too rich. Today older actors and actresses speak of the stage as having become too respectable a profession; something of that respectability had crept into the Religious Houses of the high and late Middle Ages. It was poets like Chaucer, if a little too late, who came to remind men that Christ was

crucified not to guarantee the standards of respectability, but to save them from their sins. Chaucer saw the corruption, the worm in the bud, and could only send the mocking-bird of his satire to peck at it. Recall that it was in Chaucer's century that at Fountains Abbey, near Ripon in Yorkshire, despite the Cistercian Rule forbidding architectural ostentation, a great massive tower was built—even if the inscription on its four walls, north, south, east and west, read as a salve for an abbot's guilty conscience—*Soli Deo Jesu Christo honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum* (Honour and glory to Jesus Christ alone for ever and ever).

Unfortunately those who followed Chaucer, such as Weston or Gerard, came when already the decay had set in, when all that they could hope was that by patient waiting, if nothing rash or wild was attempted, Catholicism might survive its present trials and blossom again. Perhaps even persecution might act as a kind of purgatorial refining fire. And somewhere between these two ideas—a second spring, or blossoming, and a purgatorial fire—there was to fuse some four hundred years later the concept of “the fire and the rose being one”.

A minor Catholic Elizabethan poet, Thomas Lodge, might sing of the love that “guards the roses of thy lips”, but it was also with an always vaguely conscious memory of that part of *The Cloud of Unknowing* where its author writes: “Renunciation and humility will at the last help thee to knot a ghostly knot of burning love betwixt thee and thy God in ghostly one head.”

Nowadays the image of tongues of flame infolded to make a knot of fire so that “the fire and the rose shall be one” is well known; in particular, as it were, after four hundred years it has been repeatedly used in the poetry of Edith Sitwell and others. Yet why there has been this gap of four hundred years is because whereas Gerard and Weston thought that their religion might be suppressed for a spell of maybe forty to fifty years, it was only the fanaticism of a few Catholics that dashed their hopes finally when a group of hot-heads decided to resort to violence, attempting to blow up the Houses of Parliament one November the Fifth (1605). From then on the fate of the monasteries, the plundering and falling into ruin of the abbeys, followed as naturally as the night the day. As at Fountains, perhaps the

monks had built too high elsewhere, prides' pinnacles had been reached and they needs must come toppling down. Looking back now on the reign of Elizabeth I, perhaps it would be aptest to say that these abbeys and monasteries underwent a necessary spiritual bombing. Certainly their similarity to the modern bomb-site suggests this image. Anyway I suspect that it was with something like this in mind that a century ago made John Henry Newman exclaim as he surveyed the immensity of English literature: "We cannot undo the past, English literature will ever *have been* Protestant." How now then, just a hundred years after he had delivered such a declaration in a paper, can it be that in this paper I have come to speak of mediaeval and Catholic literature not as separate entities, but as one and the same thing, sharing a common unity and faith, linked by an unbroken thread?

## II

All during Penal Times, right through the eighteenth century, Lancashire remained a loyal Catholic stronghold. Yet, in the local records, it will be found that Lancashire children were not encouraged to go to communion before they were twelve, nor were their parents encouraged to make it a daily practice. Why? I think that the answer largely resides in the fact that there was very little native spiritual reading to fall back upon and that what spiritual treatises there were tended to be translated pamphlets smuggled from abroad; and on the Continent such writing was more often than not tainted by Jansenism. Naturally this is a generalization and I only offer it because I am going to follow it up with some of the more notable exceptions at home. Apart from recusant poets such as Thomas Campion and Robert Southwell, I would mention some of the Catholic Emblem Books of the seventeenth century—more especially *Partheneia Sacra* by the Jesuit, Henry Hawkins. (And may I add this parenthesis here. I have mentioned a great many Jesuits because, as August Jessop, the nineteenth-century biographer, observed, this new Order drew to it "all the choice

and lofty spirits among Catholics". The flower of England was attracted, it has been said. Certainly, as opposed to the other religious orders, the Jesuits always had a quite definite plan of campaign. St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* teaches a man how to behave as a soldier of Christ, and his English successors worked together in unison like well-trained troops. If a man waited a decade, it did not matter; if he waited a century, it did not matter; even if he waited until the next millenium, it still did not matter. Military strategy for the Church Militant consisted in knowing how to wait.)

Hawkins was the son of a cavalier, becoming the lord of a castle in his own right on his father's death. He was ordained in Belgium and knew both imprisonment in the Tower and exile. But he remained dauntless. The marriage of Charles I with Henrietta Maria had eased the position of Catholics, and having his books printed abroad, he returned to distribute them. *Partheneia Sacra* appeared in 1633; its aim was to further devotion to our Lady. Employing the literary form made popular by Francis Quarles and his followers, Hawkins presented our Lady as "a garden shut up from the beginning" whose "marvellous society of all virtues" he goes on to compare with different objects. A frontispiece engraving of a garden illustrates the text as a whole and then, so to speak, various objects such as a dove or a star or a violet are taken out for several kinds of textual underlining—literal, symbolic, religious and poetic. "The Dove is the true and perfect type of Love; let them change caps with each other, and the Dove shall be Love, and Love a Dove"—and so the reader is introduced to a description of our Lady's powers of Love. Next comes a short sermon, a commentary and a poem. This is one of the poems, called "The Star":

The glorious Sun withdrew his beams of light;  
My sin was cause: So I in dismal night  
Am sailing in a stormy dangerous Main;  
And ere the Sun (I fear) return again,  
Shall suffer shipwreck, where the freight's my Soul.  
My only Hope's a Star, fixed near the Pole,  
But that my needle now hath lost its force,  
Once touched with Grace, and sails out of course.

Star of the Sea, thy Sun have given thee light;  
 Till he brings day, hide me in sin's dark night.  
 I seek, what Sages heretofore have done  
 Guided by Thee a Star, to find the Sun.

After the poems, there follow detailed engravings. For example, in cinematic language, the violet which has been given as a close-up first is now presented again—only this time the camera has drawn back: in the new wider focus it is revealed that an eye is shining down upon the violet. It is as if the engraver and author were to say, "Look, dear children! In the garden of men God seeks out each violet." Finally, a prayer ends each section: "O Lady Violet . . . O most orient and bright star of Heaven . . . O most innocent Dove . . . let me not fall, a catif, and unworthy worm, to nothing. . . ."

Yet even *Partheneia Sacra*, though an original work of considerable beauty, owed much to Luzvic's *Le Cœur Devôt*, which Hawkins had translated some time before. In fact Dryden apart, and his long poem *The Hind and the Panther* in which Christ's Church is the Milk-White Hind, the Panther the Church of England, the Wolves the Calvinists and the Hare the Quakers, the main references to Catholicism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are to be found in the books of those of other denominations—Boswell's *Life of Dr Johnson* or *Robinson Crusoe*, for instance. As a sign of a trickle of tolerance, listen to Defoe's charming and fair-play portrait of a French Benedictine; in spite of continued religious bitternesses by Sterne or Smollet ("defy the pope, the devil and the pretender and hope to be saved as well as another"), it shows which way the wind was blowing at the beginning of the Age of Reason:

And now I speak of marrying it brings me naturally to say something of the French ecclesiastic that I had brought with me out of the ship's crew, whom I took up at sea. It is true this man was a Roman, and perhaps it may give offence to some hereafter, if I leave anything extraordinary upon record of a man whom, before I begin, I must (to set him out in just colours) represent in terms very much to his disadvantage, in the account of Protestants: as, first, that he was a Papist; secondly a Popish priest; and, thirdly, a French Popish priest. But justice demands of me to give him a due character; and I must say he was a



grave, sober, pious and most religious person: exact in his life, extensive in his charity, and exemplary in almost everything he did. What, then, can anyone say against being very sensible of the value of such a man, notwithstanding his profession? though it may be my opinion, perhaps as well as the opinion of others who shall read this, that he was mistaken [in his beliefs].

Who would ever think of describing *Robinson Crusoe* as a "Nonconformist novel"? Yet this is more or less what people do when they chatter to each other, "Oh! *Brideshead Revisited!* Now that's my idea of a Catholic novel," or, questioningly, "I suppose you really ought to say that *The End of the Affair* is a Catholic novel?" Librarians and booksellers, doubtless, become accustomed to hearing such things. For it is all part of the modern desire to label and number everything—education, age groups or insurance cards; and with this desire there has grown a similar critical desire to label fiction—the Amis-Wain school, an L. P. Hartley situation, a Walter de la Mare fantasy. One of the current tags is "Catholic novel"; but I imagine that in a decade it will be as dead as that old tag of the '30s—"social realist". I believe that it is worth pointing out that whereas Compton Mackenzie's *Sinister Street* when it was published before the First World War was not referred to as a "Catholic novel"—Michael Fane, its hero, on the last page is just about to be received into the Church—when it was reprinted after the Second World War it was immediately dubbed as such. In the end perhaps it is simpler and wiser just to agree with Gertrude Stein that a novel is a novel is a novel . . .

Obviously a man's faith, like a man's nationality, will mark and distinguish his particular work. Disraeli's prose is both sibilant and oriental; Joyce's alive with the sound of the Liffey as she "ninny-goes, nanny-goes, nancying by"; or Hopkins with the rhythm of Dun Scotus—he "who of all men most sways my spirits to peace". Catch for a moment the rhythm of Scotus in these lines which were as true of a poet's nineteenth-century Oxford as of a scholar's mediaeval Oxford:

Towery city and branchy between towers;  
Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmèd, lark-charmèd, rook-racked,  
river-rounded;  
The dapple-eared lily below thee. . . .

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A listener who hears Heidegger read aloud will immediately recognize a music similar to that of Hopkins—though, if he is of a philosophical bent, he will also immediately realize how much Heidegger, like Hopkins, owed to Dun Scotus' original language. But this is by the by, for what I want to emphasize is something that perhaps distinguishes or marks the novelist or poet who happens to be Catholic from his other contemporaries. Let me speak primarily of the novelist.

In Greene or Sean O'Faolain, in Waugh or Bruce Marshall, or Antonia White or David Mathew—or younger writers such as Aubrey Menen or Isobel English—in some form or other there lies a predominant interest in sex; in some cases, an obsession. This is sometimes put down to the Church's rigorous stand on matters such as divorce and contraception. Personally I suspect that this is merely half the answer. When in the early part of the last century the Penal Laws were repealed, those Catholics that had still maintained their religion were living up till then in what might be called "a state of siege". My own grandfather (who if he was living would now be in his nineties) told my mother shortly after I was born that if I became either a priest or an actor he would not leave me his gold watch. Both professions he believed equally unrespectable. . . . The point I want to make here is that in a siege a city's walls must be manned, there must be a strict discipline and *esprit de corps*, with a result that the arts of peace such as poetry and philosophy and theology suffer an eclipse. That is precisely what had happened to English Catholics when they were granted emancipations in the 1830s; for nearly three centuries on the defensive, they had acquired "a siege mentality". In Berkeley Square or in Warwick Street, near Piccadilly, see how unassumingly the Catholic churches have been fitted into the landscape—no towers, no spires. At the back of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Farm Street (built in 1849) it is possible to pass the chief church of the London Jesuits almost without noticing it. Thus in 1849, in matters of theology and spiritual writings, as in architecture, there was much time to be made up. Thus again poets and novelists with their proverbial prophetic sight saw into the future and within less than a century were stating in the terms of their art the problems with which theologians

and philosophers would have to deal. Look at the lists of Catholic publishers in the '30s and see the vague wishy-washy sort of manuals they were bringing out on the part sex should play in the fully integrated layman—and contrast them with those that have appeared in the last ten years. See what an advance there has been—an advance, I submit, not a little helped by the pioneer work of a group of Catholic novelists.

In 1945, at a centenary celebration held to mark Newman's entry into the Church of Rome, I heard Monsignor Ronald Knox say that he believed in the post-war world there were three major objections to Catholicism on the part of the average Englishman: the fact that the Pope was a foreigner, the Church's teaching on contraception and her attitude towards divorce. These, then, are naturally problems that are going to interest and affect a novelist who is a Catholic, just as fifty years ago different problems such as capitalism, distributism and the possibility of a Welfare State interested Chesterton and Belloc—and to a lesser extent that neglected but superb stylist, Maurice Baring. And in looking back at the first half of the twentieth century there always ring those challenging words of Newman: "You cannot attempt a sinless literature of sinful man."

As far as English Catholics are concerned, Newman is the one really great creative thinker of the last century. When he referred to England becoming again Mary's dowry as it had been in the Middle Ages, and coined the phrase of a second spring, it was with no desire to undo the past, but rather to bridge it. He did not wish to liberalize Catholicism, but to catholicize liberalism; and if a man listened charitably to another man's argument, he would stress, there were always points of contact to be found. Bigotry was offensive to truth, just as it was a disservice to truth to whitewash history—and never was any cardinal more conscious of the whitewashing that could be done by the over-earnest when he becomes a fanatic or propagandist. Perhaps the most violent and bestial of all wars had been those carried out in the name of religion because in the name of religion. So when he looked for a second spring, it was a sort of gesture to the future, an anticipating in faith of what actually was to follow; and at the time when he was formulating these thoughts a poet in rags was huddling

under the arches of Charing Cross setting down in his big, baggy writing the poem which more than any other was going to show that, with a second spring, a Catholic literary revival had also begun. *The Hound of Heaven* and *The Hind and the Panther*. That is a comparison which alliteration has thrown like a spark off my pen—yet no sooner is it down than one remembers that if Dryden did not mean to write like Francis Thompson, at least Francis Thompson could not have written as he did had it not been for Dryden. There is a continuity of spirit there, a shackling of individual talent to the tradition.

In the pages of *The Dublin Review*, the oldest and senior Catholic periodical, can be traced better than anywhere else this literary revival. Take the attitude of William George Ward, a typical mid-nineteenth-century Catholic, and that of his son, Wilfrid Ward. William believed in gathering his contributors together and persuading them in concert first to defend Papal Infallibility and secondly to attack Agnosticism. He would have liked, contemporaries said, "a Papal Bull every morning with his *Times* at breakfast". In contrast, his son opened the pages to Catholic and non-Catholic writers alike, believing in 1906 that the aim of such a review should be not to present one "school of thought, but to keep up a certain intellectual standard". For as Newman's first biographer, he was very conscious of those earlier words of Newman: "We are living on the intellect of a former age." Once Wilfrid had tried his vocation and was later to recall that those seminarians who were most praised by their masters had been those who had learnt quickest by heart. Cardinal Manning was speaking very sensibly when he declared that seminarians ought to read Dickens as well as Aquinas. As theologians are beginning to realize in this century, sociology and theology and psychology do share a very real plane of inter-connexion.

Nymphomania is often caused by a feeling of social insecurity; so too is razor-slashing. Here is a passage from *Brighton Rock* (1938) where the boy, Pinkie, has come back from the races after a successful bout of razor-slashing:

He heard a whisper, looked sharply round and thrust the paper back. In an alley between two shops, an old woman sat

upon the ground: he could just see the rotting and discoloured face: it was like the sight of damnation. Then he heard the whisper: "Blessed art thou among women," saw the grey fingers fumbling at the beads. This was not one of the damned: he watched with horrified fascination: this was one of the saved . . .

Such writing is a mixture, perhaps, of the religious, sociological and psychological; it is a three-fold approach which lends it a kind of triple power—and power, whether it be that of electricity or innocence, the heat of the sun or the Church—is a significant factor in modern poetry and prose. It is no good just dismissing the nymphomaniac as a sinner, or saying that the delinquent is evil. An artist, like a priest, must try and get inside their souls. As writers can bring about prison reform, so writers can help to produce a climate of religious toleration. I quoted Defoe in the eighteenth century with regard to a French Benedictine; I have also quoted Graham Greene with regard to the razor-slasher. Newman would have been sympathetic to both Defoe and Greene.

In sponsoring a Catholic revival in letters, Newman, more than most, realized the danger of hard and fast rules, just as he realized in the confessional the danger of hard and fast rules with regard to sin. "The Church is not a policeman, but a guardian," he had said, adding, "you cannot attempt a sinless literature of sinful man."

Imagine the man of hard and fast rules visiting Ancient Greece. He would note that such and such a city lay in a plain between two rocky barriers, meeting at an angle; he might note also that there was a good supply of water, olives in abundance, and the oil first-rate. Unlike Newman, not for a moment would he think of reporting that "the olive tree was so choice in nature and so noble in shape, that it excited a religious veneration"; nor for a moment would he think of speaking of the clear air which "brought out, yet blended and subdued, the colours on the marble, till they had a softness and harmony" such as can only be witnessed on the shores of the Aegean. Yet that was Newman's way, Newman's legacy. He caught in his prose the clear air which one May morning on a Malvern hillside in a summer season was caught by Langland as it was to

be caught and handed on by Hopkins in his "skies of couple colour as a brindled cow" or his "rose moles all in stipple upon trout that swim".

Here are observations of God's grandeur, re-orientated in language and emancipated by time and yet making a passage of centuries seem naught. John Gerard's description of his first landing in England is not unlike some pages in *The Power and the Glory* (1940), with its Dryden epigraph:

Th'inclosure narrow'd; the sagacious power  
Of hounds and death drew nearer every hour.

There is an echo of the Elizabethan narrative: "Every track led up to the house—as we knew at once when the dogs started to bark." Again, Gerard's interest in an apostolate connected with the aristocracy, the great estates and large houses is perhaps not unlike the sentiments expressed some weeks in *The Tablet*. At the other extreme, in the monthly *The Catholic Worker* there appear sentiments nearer to Langland—yet both weekly and monthly go to show the continued width, diversity—in a word, catholicity—of Catholicism in the sphere of modern journalism alone. Or remember the date 1796—the year Mrs Inchbald published *A Simple Story*, in which poor Miss Milner finds that she is in love with her guardian who turns out to be a priest. See how honour resolves this affair and contrast it, say, with a 1951 novel, almost out of memory—*The Passionate Shepherd*, in which a similar theme is the plot. Or again, think of the fusing between the mediaeval rose-symbol with that of fire and the Atom Bomb—so memorably celebrated in the poetry of Edith Sitwell. "What may this be?" asked Dame Julian of a little thing, "the quantity of a hazel nut" and "as round as a ball". And it was answered her thus: "It is all that is made." For the modern poet, like Dame Julian in her *Divine Revelations*, is faced with a discovery—the splitting of the atom—which may prove as explosive or shattering to thought as did the discovery that the world was flat or that, after all, Galileo was right. For the artist who is prepared to fall upon his knees it may seem now more than ever that the world hangs on by the Grace of God.

The present, it is repeated almost daily by statesmen, is a turning-point in history where atomic or hydrogen energy used for war may destroy mankind, but which if used for peaceful ends may provide a means for re-charging those parts of the world's soil where expected over-population in ten years' time might bring famine. And perhaps under the arches of some midland station at this very moment a writer who happens to be a Catholic is picking up his pen. The pattern is clear for tracing. Is not atomic or hydrogen energy an answer, other than contraception, to future famine in the Far East or, perhaps one day, nearer home? Naturally my imaginary poet or novelist will not speak thus categorically or *ex cathedra*, preferring the artist's way, which is always to suggest that "your guess is as good as mine". None the less the hint will have been dropped—pick it up who may. In other words, he will have fulfilled Newman's hope:

But there is nothing of special courage, nothing of personal magnanimity in a Catholic making light of the world and beginning to preach to it, though it turn its face from him. He knows the nature and the habits of the world; and it is his immemorial way of dealing with it; he does but act according to his vocation; he would not be a Catholic, did he act otherwise. He knows whose vessel he has entered; it is the bark of Peter. When the greatest of the Romans was in an open boat on the Adriatic, he said to the terrified boatmen, "*Caesarem vehis et fortunam Caesaris*, Caesar is your freight and Caesar's fortune." What he said in presumption we can repeat in faith of that boat in which Christ once sat and preached. We have not chosen to have fear about it; we have not entered it to escape out of it; no, but to go forth in it upon the flood of sin and unbelief, which would sink any other craft. . . . We act according to our name: Catholics are at home in every time and place, in every state of society, in every class of the community, in every stage of cultivation.

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

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## ST JOSEPH AND ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

"JESUS began to say to the multitudes concerning John . . . This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold I send my angel before thy face who shall prepare thy way before thee.' Amen, I say to you there hath not risen among those born of women a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is lesser in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

"There can be no doubt," wrote Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical "*Quamquam Pluries*" of 15 August 1889, "that more than any other person St Joseph approached that supereminent dignity by which the Mother of God is raised far above all created natures."

In attributing to St Joseph the pre-eminence that our Lord's words might seem to have declared to be John the Baptist's, the Pope was doing no more than make explicit the preference which St Joseph enjoys in the popular devotion of today. Now, it is not suggested that this preference is irreconcilable with our Lord's praise of John, nor even that it is difficult to reconcile the two, yet there is at least an apparent difficulty. The purpose of this article, however, is not primarily to solve that difficulty (the solution of which can be found in any modern Scripture commentary), but rather to carry out an investigation into the way the text has been understood in the course of centuries, and to observe what effect, if any, the growth of devotion to St Joseph has had upon its interpretation.

In order to do this it is first necessary to have a general notion of the history of devotion to St Joseph. If we divide the two thousand years of the Christian era into four equal periods, we can say that in the first five hundred years there is no sign of any devotion to St Joseph whatsoever. In the second there are no more than the first stirrings to be detected: the most positive sign being the introduction of St Joseph's name into the martyrology of the Benedictine monastery of Reichenau in the ninth century. It is true that throughout this first thousand years the apocryphal writings such as the second-century "Protoevangel of James" and the "Gospel of Thomas" have a good deal to say about St Joseph, but the patently spurious

picture they present, whilst it may have excited wonder, certainly did not foster devotion.

The third period, starting with St Bernard and the *devotio moderna* (that tender reflective meditation upon the scenes of the gospels), is a period of continuous, steady growth, reaching its full stature in men like St Bernardine of Sienna and John Gerson in the fifteenth century. John Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, is especially outstanding. It was largely due to his efforts that a feast of St Joseph was first introduced for use in Rome in 1479, and from that time to our present day the process of increasing devotion and of ever-growing liturgical honour has continued unchecked. The feast was extended to the whole Church by Gregory XV in 1621; in 1870 Pius IX declared him Patron of the Universal Church.

In almost diametrical opposition to this slow growth of devotion to St Joseph is the course of that paid to St John the Baptist. In the early centuries of the Church the vivid picture that the Gospels painted of him—a picture full of that detail, so noticeably absent in the case of St Joseph—so caught the imagination of the faithful, that it gained for him a position of unquestioned pre-eminence—a position that was his until the late Middle Ages. It needs no proof to show that he is no longer a popular saint.

Against such a background it is not surprising to find the text of St Matthew interpreted in the sense most favourable to John the Baptist in the early period.

St John Chrysostom at Constantinople at the end of the fourth century is eloquent in his praise,<sup>1</sup> and St Ambrose, in Milan about the same time, exclaims: "O how great is John to whose greatness our Saviour himself thus bore witness. He excels all, surpasses everyone without exception; greater than the prophets, superior to the patriarchs, so that, in fine, whoever is born of woman is inferior to John."<sup>2</sup> A little later St Augustine's flock in Africa heard him preaching on the Nativity of St John: "The Church has not celebrated the earthly birthday of any of the prophets, or patriarchs, or apostles; two only birthdays she celebrates, that of John and that of Christ. John was a great

<sup>1</sup> *P.G.*, 57, 419 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *P.L.*, 17, 732.

man and yet but man. So great a man was he that whatever should be greater than he should be God. . . . For Christ said, 'No one has arisen among those born of woman greater than John the Baptist.' If no man is greater than thee (O John), what must he be who is greater than thee? What indeed must he be? O hear the answer: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'"<sup>1</sup> This is not an isolated passage; the sermons of St Augustine are full of such exaltation of John.

Yet it would not be correct to give the impression that the text was accepted without any qualification at this time. St Jerome, for instance, in his Commentary on Matthew, says that by this statement "our Lord did not set John above the other prophets and patriarchs and all men, for it does not follow that if others are not greater than he, he is greater than others".<sup>2</sup> And St Cyril of Alexandria, after saying that Christ here "sets him up as the living image of the highest virtue possible to those born of woman", adds, "But he who is born again of the Spirit is greater than any born of woman, and so John asks to be baptized by Christ, as if by this to make himself greater than he was already, and never more to be reckoned as born of woman, but as transformed to divine nobility."<sup>3</sup>

But, in spite of such qualification, the more absolute interpretation of the text was the one which was handed on during the next five hundred years. So Gregory the Great writes at the end of the sixth century, "Rightly is he called an angel, that in his name should shine forth the dignity his deeds displayed. High indeed his name, but his life not less."<sup>4</sup> John Damascene in the eighth century, defending the cult of the Sacred Images, places John in the second place after our Lady and before the apostles, with no mention of St Joseph.<sup>5</sup> St Bede in England, at the same time, was still following Jerome, Augustine and Ambrose; as was Rabanus Maurus a hundred years later. It was this interpretation that passed into the Ordinary Gloss on the Bible, which the mediaeval West accepted as being the

<sup>1</sup> *P.L.*, 38, 1301.

<sup>2</sup> *P.L.*, 26, 74.

<sup>3</sup> *P.G.*, 75, 157 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> *P.L.*, 76, 1097.

<sup>5</sup> *P.G.*, 94, 1167.

whole mind of the Fathers. The slow growth of devotion to St Joseph had not as yet had any effect on the way the text was understood.

In the early twelfth century St Bernard was speaking eloquently in praise of St Joseph, as many of the lessons in the office for St Joseph's feasts bear witness. The prayer to St Joseph, which appears in the priest's preparation for Mass at the front of the missal, is his, and expresses well the reason for his praise. "O fortunate man, blessed Joseph, to whom it was given to see the God whom many Kings yearned to see and did not see, to hear and did not hear; and not only to see and hear, but to carry, to kiss, to clothe and protect him."

Yet even for Bernard there is no question of making any comparison with John. In a sermon on the Nativity of John the Baptist we hear him say: "And lastly our Lord declares that John transcends the earth, outstrips the heavens, attains to the very peak of angelic dignity. 'Amongst those born of woman,' he says, 'there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.' What more could you wish? Of no one, says Augustine, could it be said what is said of John. Do not tell me that John the Evangelist was loved more than the other disciples, that the Prince of the Apostles was set above the rest, that the vessel of election was rapt to the third heaven; do not compare the apostolic splendour with the Precursor, for all these apostles were full-grown men when the truth said: 'There hath not risen amongst the sons of women a greater than John the Baptist.' Consider the mansions of the Kingdom, set the whole order of human generations in array before you, John alone will you find set before or equalled to the Fathers both of the Old and of the New Testament."<sup>1</sup>

Nearly three hundred years later, in 1416, when devotion to St Joseph had become widespread, John Gerson, St Joseph's leading champion, preached before the Council of Constance urging the Council to institute a feast in honour of St Joseph, and to invoke his aid in bringing an end to the disastrous schism then working havoc in the western Church. "God chose Joseph," he said, "to be the husband of the Mother of God; in that fact a devout, meditative soul discovers enough to be inspired to

<sup>1</sup> *P.L.*, 184, 1000.

praise Mary and Joseph in every way by justly ascribing to them all the glory that exists in other creatures, the angels included."<sup>1</sup> Again he suggests St. Joseph's superiority to John when he says: "If the babe John exulted with joy in his mother's womb at the single greeting of Mary, what divine consolation and enlightenment the just man Joseph received from his continual dwelling and conversation with Mary and the boy Jesus cannot be described." This meditative approach is St Bernard's—and it is this growing realization of the implications of St Joseph's union with Jesus and Mary that will lead eventually to his being set above John in the order of sanctity. But that time has not yet come. So firmly was St John established in the fifteenth century that even John Gerson—and it is surprising to hear it from his lips, who had claimed for Joseph sanctification in the womb and bodily assumption into heaven—declares explicitly: "The life of John the Baptist was angelic and, after Christ and his Mother, the most perfect of all those in this world . . . and as to his position in heaven, that he is exalted to the very highest order there is no doctor, I think, who denies."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, although the traditional understanding of the text still held firm, the tide of devotion to St Joseph was running strongly around it, a tide that came to the flood in the years immediately after Gerson—especially in the religious orders.

This same period, from 1450 to 1600, the period of the Reformation, saw towards its close that great resurgence of Scripture studies which produced men like Maldonatus, Estius and A Lapide. In their commentaries on the text of St Matthew we detect the influence both of the Reformation and of devotion to St Joseph.

Maldonatus (1533–83) in a typically vigorous passage denounces the new heretics who interpret the text as according John the highest place amongst the prophets only and not the highest grade of sanctity. "This solution is a dangerous error, agreeing neither with piety nor with the statement of Christ," he writes. "There is not a single one amongst the ancient writers who has understood the text of John's prophetic office

<sup>1</sup> *Opera* [Antwerp 1706], III, 1354.

<sup>2</sup> *Opera* IV, 210, 228. Cf. 205 sqq.

rather than of the holiness of his life." So he defends St John against the minimizing interpretations of the heretics. Yet how is the text to be understood? Clearly John is not more holy than Christ, "nor would any deny that Mary was more holy, since as mother she was nearer to her Son than John his precursor". He gives it as his opinion that the text is to be understood as ascribing to John the highest sanctity possible under the Old Law, a sanctity which of its nature is inferior to that of the Law of the Gospel. Yet, he says, although as a state the sanctity of the New Testament is superior to that of the Old, this does not mean that personally John was less holy than any Christian: "There is no doubt that John far excelled in holiness many and even most Christians." With this view of Maldonatus, which had in substance been proposed by St Cyril in the fifth century, the great contemporary commentators agree. A Lapidé may speak for them all: "John was the holiest man in the Old Testament," he says, "but since the text refers to the Old Testament, John is not here compared with Christ or the Blessed Virgin or the Apostles, who followed Christ and who (by reason of their apostolic dignity) were not less than John, but rather greater than he."

Now, although St Joseph is not here explicitly excluded from our Lord's encomium of John, it is clear that if St Joseph can be excluded from the company of Old Testament saints in which John holds first place, then our Lord's words imply no comparison of John with Joseph, and there is no obstacle to asserting St Joseph's superior holiness. So far no commentator had made this point; Joseph, like John, is regarded as being a bridge or mediator between the Old and New Testaments, or as Salmeron expresses it, of being the "horizon" between the two. It was Francis Suarez, in his commentary on the third part of St Thomas, who first made the necessary transition. Discussing Joseph's dignity and explicitly comparing it with that of the Apostles and St John, he argues that if John is more holy than the apostles, as the Fathers claim (a claim, as we have just noticed, that his contemporaries did not allow), "then it is not rash to compare Joseph with the apostles or even to set him above them, for it is probable that Joseph received more grace than John the Baptist, since he seems to have had a more

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excellent office and to have enjoyed greater opportunity for growing in grace and charity." Moreover, he adds, "Joseph's ministry belonged neither to the New nor properly to the Old Testament, but rather to the Author of both, and to the cornerstone linking the two." He belonged (and this is the important step), like Mary, to the "Hypostatic Order", "an order which of its very nature is of a higher perfection".<sup>1</sup>

Suarez's explanation, which he proposed only tentatively, was at once accepted by those who, following St Teresa and St Francis de Sales, were anxious to promote devotion to St Joseph. Father du Barry, S.J., in a book on St Joseph published in Lyons in 1640, after conceding that "God has highly favoured many other saints, such as St John the Baptist, whom the Divine Word declared the 'greatest among the sons of women'," affirms that St Joseph holds the first rank in heaven and earth, for whilst "these other great saints hold first place in their own hierarchy, they are not included in the order of the Hypostatical Union, and in the mystery of the Incarnation, wherein those only are comprised who are most nearly related to Jesus and Mary, namely St Joseph who completes this created Trinity. This is a hierarchy apart of far greater excellence and dignity than the rest."<sup>2</sup>

A hundred years later, in 1726, Cardinal Prosper Lambertini, who was to become Benedict XIV, giving his judgement on a petition that St Joseph's name should be inserted in the Litanies of the Saints—and, because of his superior holiness, in the place before that of St John the Baptist's—would not allow the force of Suarez's argument. "There is no authority for St Joseph's greater holiness in Scripture," he wrote, "nor does Tradition support it." However, he had been sufficiently influenced to admit that the text of Matthew accords John a superior dignity in the Old Testament only, whereas "Joseph belongs to the New Testament".<sup>3</sup>

When the same petition was renewed in 1869 the Congregation of Rites repeated Cardinal Lambertini's decision and declined to make any change in the Litany.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, in

<sup>1</sup> *Opera*, Vives XIX, 121 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Reprint 1873. Edited by G. Tickell, S.J. *Devotions to St. Joseph*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione*, IV, pt. 2, c. 20, 45 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> *Analecta Juris Pontificii*, Series XX, 838.



the following year, another petition signed by 255 members of the hierarchy, including 38 out of the 42 cardinals present at the Vatican Council, begged the Council to declare:

(1) That even as Blessed Joseph, through being the father of Christ became so much "superior to all creatures as he inherited a more excellent name than they", so by a decree of the Congregation of Rites, the public cultus of *dulia* should in future be granted him in the universal Church and in the sacred liturgy, second to the Blessed Mother of God and before all the saints.

(2) That St Joseph, to whom the protection of the Holy Family was committed, should be made, next to the Blessed Virgin, the primary patron of the universal Church.<sup>1</sup>

On 8 December 1870 Pius IX declared St Joseph patron of the Universal Church; he passed no judgement on the rank of veneration to be paid to the saint, and in 1892 the Congregation of Rites declared that the Holy Father "did not think fit to bestow on the Holy Patriarch a higher liturgical cultus which would alter the status wisely established in the Church over a long period".<sup>2</sup>

In spite of such official caution, the association of Joseph with Jesus and Mary in a distinct "hypostatic order", with consequent exaltation of St Joseph, has become firmly established. Pope Pius XI, speaking of St Joseph's superiority to John, refers to "his unique and magnificent mission . . . of co-operating in the Incarnation and the Redemption".<sup>3</sup> It is in this light that modern commentators view Matthew xi, 11. Father Joseph Mueller in his book *The Fatherhood of Joseph* answers the objection that this text should place John the Baptist also in the hypostatic order, by saying that "The office or task of St John the Baptist had nothing whatever to do with bringing about the Incarnation, but evidently presupposes it. His task was to make the Incarnation known to men, and make them believe in it, and therefore belonged to the ordinary order of grace, which was itself a result of the Incarnation. . . . There is therefore no comparison with St Joseph, and the fact that St John was the

<sup>1</sup> *Collectio Lacensis*, 7, 895.

<sup>2</sup> *Auth. Coll.*, Dec., *S.R.C.*, 3789.

<sup>3</sup> *La Vie Spir.*, 19, 678, 1928-29.

greatest prophet of the Old Testament has no value to prove that he belonged to the order of the hypostatic union" (p. 178).

That is the position today. It may seem at first sight to be a direct contradiction of St Ambrose's: "He excels all, and whatever is born of woman is less than John," and of Augustine's: "Whatever is greater than John is God," yet the difference is one of emphasis, produced by a different devotional viewpoint. Even in the fifth century St Cyril, St Augustine and the others realized that the statement: "There has not risen a greater than John the Baptist," was qualified by the addition: "Yet he that is lesser in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." Yet since in the popular devotion of the time there was no other saint of the eminence of St John, it was natural that when preaching to their people they should have crowned their own panegyric of the saint with our Lord's own praise of him, and should have done so in perhaps too enthusiastic and uncritical a spirit. The question of the comparative sanctity of John and Joseph had not arisen for them, and consequently they spoke without qualification. Their authority was so great and devotion to the Baptist so deeply ingrained in the faithful that when the question did arise it was made more difficult to answer in St Joseph's favour by having the support of over a thousand years of tradition citing it in favour of John's sanctity.

That it was eventually answered in a way favourable to St Joseph was the fruit, as we have seen, of a long slow process: the gradual development of the single idea that Joseph was intimately united with Christ. "Joseph alone stands out in august dignity," says Leo XIII, "because he was the guardian of the Son of God by divine appointment, and in the opinion of men, his father." All the praises of St Bernard and John Gerson, all that Suarez and his modern successors have to say about his belonging to the "hypostatic order", can be reduced to this. This, too, is the ground for his being declared in 1870 to be the Patron or Foster-father of the whole Church, and his being included in the Divine Praises in 1921.

As this idea developed, as the devotional attitude it represents grew more widespread, so devotion to John the Baptist declined, and the decline was reflected in the changing interpretation of the text of St Matthew. The change in interpretation

is in itself a small thing, yet precisely because it does reflect this profound change in the Church's devotional outlook it is not unimportant.

Whereas, in the early centuries, the wonderful externals of John's career, as recorded in the Gospel—his miraculous birth, his austere life, his spectacular death—were sufficient to gain for him the first place in the veneration of the faithful, today, St Joseph, of whom the Gospel tells us virtually nothing, is seen nevertheless to have been more highly favoured by the simple fact of his intimate association with Jesus and Mary. Such a change of viewpoint is an indication of a deeper insight into the nature of sanctity, of a growth in spiritual maturity. It is a development for which the most fitting commentary is to be found in the words of John himself: "For he must increase, but I must decrease."<sup>1</sup>

BERNARD HALL, S.J.

### ON SAYING THE DIVINE OFFICE

MANY of us are at times tempted to feel that, of all the forms of prayer we employ, the Divine Office seems the least rewarding. It is not that we do not know that the Office represents the fruit of the Church's experience, and that on the strength of that experience the Church has for centuries emphasized its unique position and importance in our spiritual life. We know, too, that the Church binds us to its recitation under pain of mortal sin and must therefore attach even more importance to it than to mental prayer, which is not imposed under such grave sanctions.<sup>2</sup> Yet, in spite of all this, and in spite of the fact that we think of the Divine Office with respect and veneration,

<sup>1</sup> John iii, 30.

<sup>2</sup> The gravity of the sanction under which some duty is imposed is a very good guide to the importance attached to it by the Church. But of course it is useless to pit prayer against prayer—all we can really say is that there is a grave moral obligation on priests to pray according to a certain set form of words.

tion, many of us tend to feel that it is less immediately helpful, less directly in touch with the mainsprings of our spiritual life, than private prayer or our personal devotions. Nor do I think that we can solve this difficulty on the lines of certain liturgical enthusiasts who tell us that the Office, being the official prayer of the Church, is so much "higher" than our own private prayer that the reverent recitation of it will sanctify us imperceptibly by a kind of *opus operatum*. All this may be true as far as it goes, but we feel it to be insufficient. We feel that prayer should be more immediately applicable to our needs, a refreshment of mind and heart; we feel that, though pure faith is darkness to human reason, it should, if possible, have a counterpart in those movements of mind and heart that we call "devotion". We tend to wish for something less rarefied.

Again, we all know by experience that saying the Divine Office has its own peculiar difficulties and temptations. For some of us there is the very real problem of time. Though not many are placed in a position where the recitation of the Office becomes literally a physical impossibility, yet only too many of us know how physical tiredness can render it almost impossible for us to concentrate in the way we should wish. Even more troublesome than weariness is a kind of mental nervousness, an enervation—the by-product of great activity—which makes it very hard for us to calm ourselves sufficiently to overcome a nervous desire to hurry through our Office and thus to earn the condemnation of the psalmist "*dilexisti omnia verba precipitationis*". Those who say or sing the Office in choir have the great advantage that the pace is set by the whole body, but the speed of saying the Office in private is entirely in our own hands. It is only too easy to try to "get in" Vespers "before the Children of Mary Meeting" or even "before the nine o'clock news". Equally it is only too easy to try to kill two birds with one stone and thus, for example, to get the rather disedifying spectacle of the clergy assiduously reading their breviaries during a solemn *Requiem* for one of their number.

Nevertheless if we could only feel more convinced of the value to us—as individuals seeking God—of the prayers of the breviary many of these difficulties would press us less hardly. If we can really see the "sense" in something we can endure a

great deal to achieve it. How are we to arrive at this "sense" which we know, but find so hard to feel, is the *sensus ecclesiae*?

Let us try to come to grips with our problem. In the first place, a word or two of caution. The Divine Office is far more complex than other forms of prayer. It is something constructed on the grand scale. It is inevitable therefore that it will not reveal its secrets in a moment, for it is only the relatively insignificant that can be appreciated fully at the first acquaintance. We must all have had the experience of listening to some great symphony which appeared to us at first a disconnected if majestic series of sounds; it took time and patience before the music revealed itself for what it was. Once so revealed we felt that we could never weary of it, never come to the end of what it could offer us. Equally we have had the experience of hearing some catchy melody which captured us at once; for a few weeks it was perhaps part of our life, but eventually its shallowness was revealed and we left it without regret for something else. Thus we must not expect the Divine Office to appeal to us at once; like all great works it can be appreciated fully only after years of sympathy and study. Too often, perhaps, we have been "put off" our breviaries during the first years after ordination and find it hard now to imagine that there is anything for us in their pages, however helpful we may believe them to be for others.

All this is by way of preliminary. To arrive at a real understanding of the Divine Office we have, I think, to try to go back to the minds of those who put it together, to keep before us the one fact that was certainly before them. St Augustine gives us the clue when he says "when we pray we both hear and speak"; for him and for the Fathers prayer was mainly thought of as the prayer of Christ to His Father articulated by human lips. We are one with Christ, Christ is "our life" as the Apostle says, and therefore in a very real sense our prayer is His prayer. That is why we preface the *Pater noster* at Mass by the words "*audemus dicere*"; it is an act of bold confidence which enables us to assert that by calling God "our Father" we are one with Christ, to assert that we are addressing Him, not vaguely as the Father and Creator of the universe, but as *our* Father because we have become His sons by adoption.

Christ, then, is praying in and to His Father through us. But this does not mean that our prayer is no longer our own. Each of us as a person is unique, and each of us therefore articulates uniquely to God the eternal voice of His Son. Each of us has, as it were, his own note to add to the chorus of faith and love, a note which no one else has ever sounded, ever will sound, could ever sound. Christ's life is our life and Christ's prayer is our prayer. *Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus.*

In the psalter, therefore, we are both articulating and listening to the words of Christ—*neque audietur vox eius foris*—we are not merely repeating some age-old formula. It is a living voice that speaks through our lips, it is a living voice we hear, it is a living voice that gives life to ancient words.

How then are we to make these truths real to us in practice? What practical steps can we take? In general, keeping in mind that Christ is speaking to God through our lips in all the psalms, responsories and antiphons we say, we should cultivate a habit of listening to Him, of identifying ourselves with whatever He is saying in us. We should keep in mind the fact that though He Himself can suffer no longer, He can suffer in us; that our sufferings are His sufferings, our joys His joys. Even when we hear the psalm speaking in the person of a sinner we need not hesitate, for Christ, though spotless, underwent all the effects of human sin, of our sin.<sup>1</sup>

If we persevere in this attitude to the Divine Office, which was certainly that of its compilers, we shall be surprised to find that so much of what appeared meaningless or irrelevant will now fall into place. The long 118th Psalm will take on a new significance. The Invitatory and its psalm, now "listened to" as the voice of Christ speaking to God, acquire a new meaning. Thus, to give one example, *quadraginta annis proximus fui generationi huic* no longer merely refers to God's care of the Israelites in the desert, it relates directly to Christ's thirty-three years of visible life on earth.

<sup>1</sup> There are two small practical difficulties. First, the *Gloria Patri* at the end of each psalm may seem to upset our thread of thought; I think we should regard it as the moment when, so to say, Christ "hands over" to His creation to endorse His words by its praise of the Trinity. Second, some modern offices are directed to Christ immediately; here again we should remember that it is only another string of the instrument that is being plucked. We turn for a while directly to praise Christ as our Redeemer and King.

Further, we can identify ourselves with the liturgical seasons by uniting ourselves with Christ speaking of His sufferings on the Cross, of His triumph at the Resurrection and Ascension, of the bestowal of His Spirit at Pentecost. On ferial days we can either take our cue from the mood of the psalms themselves or we can identify our own feelings of suffering or joy with Christ suffering or triumphant.

It should perhaps be noted in passing that what is said of the psalms and antiphons of the breviary also applies to most of the Introits, Graduals, and Offertories, etc., at Mass. Thus on Maundy Thursday at the offertory we sing "*Dextera Domini fecit virtutem, dextera Domini exaltavit me; non moriar sed vivam et narrabo opera Domini*" and we see its full significance as the words of Christ on the eve of His Passion asserting that His death will be no death and that His Father will triumph over all that pain and sin can do.

What, however, of the feasts of the saints? Here, I think, we can remember another consequence of our one-ness with Christ. If Christ speak in us and we in Him, then all who live in and by Christ must speak through Him and therefore through us. In the Preface at Mass we state that all the choirs of angels praise the majesty of the Father in and through Christ—*per quem maiestatem tuam laudant angeli, adorant dominationes etc.*—and we beg that our voice may be joined to theirs. But if the heavenly choirs are so praying through Christ, so must also be our Lady and the saints, all those on earth who live in Christ and all the dead in Christ.

On a feast day, therefore, we can become the mouthpiece of the saint whom we are commemorating. We can articulate that particular saint on earth; they can speak through us and we can actually add a new note to their eternal praise of God, our prayer becoming an actual participation of their union with Him. Or, if we feel so inclined, we can join with Christ speaking in praise of His Mother or of the saint whose feast it is.

In purgatory, the dead in Christ can no longer ask in human speech for mercy and eternal rest: but they can still ask for it in our speech, they can still speak through our lips. The Office of the Dead, taken in this sense, begins to acquire its real meaning. In the psalms, the antiphons and even the lessons, the



dead speak through us to God. Through us they adore the Father—the King to Whom all things live—and with us they ask for pity and forgiveness. *Expectans expectavi Dominum . . .* there sounds the voice of one whom we have known and loved; lips, perhaps long closed in death, can still make themselves heard. Those whom we have loved, though dead to us, are not dead to Christ; with Him and in Him death has no dominion over them and we, living by that risen life which is also theirs, can bridge the gulf of human mortality and make their words our own.

What we have just said applies also, of course, to all those on earth who live by Christ. We can literally pray *for* them. We can become the mouthpiece of their prayer. If we say our Office for someone we are praying in his place, the words of the psalms become his words, its thoughts his desires. As we can “hear” Christ speaking, so can we “hear” them speaking and because we know who is speaking our words gain a new significance.

Finally, if we learn how to listen to Christ speaking through us in the psalms, we shall find that there is no longer any dislocation between what appears to be a formal, hieratic, mode of prayer and our private prayer, whether mental or vocal. *Vacate et videte quia ego sum Deus* is as applicable to the one as to the other.<sup>1</sup>

The new reform of the breviary, which does so much to shorten and simplify the saying of the Divine Office, may perhaps become a fresh starting-point for some of us. As we know, the Office will not reveal its secrets in a month or a year. But if we persevere with our effort to listen to Christ, if we reach the heart of the meaning of the liturgical seasons by listening to the dispositions of Christ at His moments of suffering and triumph, if we learn to join with our Lady and the saints in their praise of God, if we direct our intention to articulate now this living person, now this soul in purgatory, in their supplication to God, then we shall see gradually what the Divine Office was intended to be as the basis of our daily prayer. Gradually we shall become

<sup>1</sup> Considered in this way all forms of prayer differ only one from another in that they differ as to the mode of Christ's utterance in us; the One who speaks is the same in all. Indeed this attitude of “listening” to the voice of God makes the difference between the Divine Office and our mental prayer a very small one indeed.

more alert to hear, and quicker to understand, the voice of Christ—that Word which, uttered first in the silence of eternity, becomes articulate now in our faltering human speech.

DOM AELRED WATKIN, O.S.B.

### A PLEA FOR LIAISON

**I**N the two pressing problems of consolidation and extension in which we priests are all engaged—i.e. the problems of negatively preventing people from lapsing and positively making converts, many think in terms so wide and broad as to be too vague to be effective. Thus, in reference to the first, there are some still sufficiently naïve as to believe that the leakage can be eradicated by one or other panacea: the liturgy in the vernacular, youth clubs . . . and so on; guaranteed nostrums that come up for regular airing in the correspondence columns of our Catholic Press. As regards the second, there are many who still look upon the Conversion of England in the light of a mass-conversion, a sort of “third Spring” that will surprise us all.

It is forgotten that these two works of consolidation and extension are founded not on all-embracing remedies or mass-movements, but rather on a multitude of small concrete individual acts and contacts. Any work to prevent a Catholic lapsing will eventually be the work—allowing always for Grace—of one individual on another. Likewise a conversion is achieved ultimately by one person bringing another into the Church.

One such small, concrete and practical way in which, it seems, much more could be done to prevent Catholics from silently sliding away from their duties, lies in the co-operation between priests of different localities, and between chaplains of institutions and the parishes to which the members of the institutions eventually return. This article is a plea for closer co-operation between priests, more awareness of the value of liaison, a deeper regard for the individual's salvation whether he is in my parish or now belongs to another. Let me quote an example.

A marriage had taken place—it was a sacristy wedding. The groom was a decent fellow who with a little encouragement could have been a good convert, but his Catholic bride was a regular Mass-misser. Knowing that they were going to live in another town, the priest who had married them felt ruefully sure that within a year they would have joined the vast legion of unknown and uncalculable lapsed. At the last moment, more out of idle than practical interest, he asked them for their future address. Later, while he filled in their *Fides Matrimonii*, he wrote to a priest of the parish in which they were to live. As things turned out, that after-thought of a question as to their address was in fact an eternal life-saver. The boy has responded to the enthusiasm of his new priest visitor. He is now under instruction and seeing to it that his wife comes with him to Mass every Sunday.

In regard to this question of a floating population, in practice, marriage is the only occasion when the priest can know of someone leaving his parish to take up residence elsewhere. At other times our parishioners seem to slip off without our hearing about it. On the occasion of marriage, however, we have an opportunity of finding out where they are going to live. (How unfortunately often is it two rooms over a shop or a furnished bed-sitter in a non-Catholic house, places not normally covered by routine census work.) If, as surely as the priest sends out the *Fides*, he were to notify his appropriate colleague of his new parishioners, what a number would be saved from lapsing! How many times do our people move to another parish, glad to be and remain religiously anonymous, happy to be without the constant reminder of a priest's call which alone would nudge so many of them into doing their Catholic duty.

Chaplains in charge of reformatories, approved schools, prisons and the like, miss a great opportunity if they neglect to inform the parish priest of the discharge of one of their inmates. One has read with a certain horror the shameful figures which Mrs Knight gave a short while ago to an audience in Manchester: although the Catholic proportion of the population is only 8 per cent, the Catholic proportion of delinquents is 26 per cent. One may doubt a little the complete accuracy of these figures, or at least the method by which they were assessed, and

wonder if they present a true picture. But even so, one is bound to agree that an alarmingly high proportion of Catholics in comparison with other religious groups in the country are in fact criminals. No means available should be disregarded if they are likely to reduce this number by even a little.

The chaplain of a Remand Home in the North recently duplicated a form which explains itself and its purpose. "Dear Reverend Father, The boy.....(name), who is a member of your parish, whose address is....., and who was at.....School, has been discharged today from the Remand Home. While in the Home he made/did not make/his Confession and Communion. We know that you will be interested in his future welfare." The chaplain says that it is still too early to discover the value of this easy and simple scheme, but it is hard to see how, if the priests of the boys' parishes do their job, it could fail to prevent at least some of these delinquents from returning for another spell in the Home. In addition, it may be quite impossible for the priests of a large city parish to know just how many parishioners are or have been criminals, and the regularity with which they receive such a note as this may give them a very unpleasant surprise which they would otherwise be spared.

This scheme could also be extended to hospitals. It does not need much hospital experience for a priest to realize how often and how readily a Catholic who may have given up his religion years previously returns—quite sincerely—to Confession and Communion. What a pity if, through lack of a follow-up, the patient on his discharge suffers a spiritual relapse which could have been forestalled by a brief note to his parish. (In cases of this kind it would no doubt be advisable for the patient's permission to be obtained before a note is sent.)

Originality is not claimed for any of these ideas. There are, in fact, a small number of parishes and institutions where such notification is taken as a matter of course. It is claimed, however, that if such schemes had been practised on a much larger scale, known and active Catholics would now be much more than Mrs Knight's 8 per cent, and the criminals something less than her 26 per cent. (If the scheme now operating in Ireland of informing English priests of the whereabouts of emigrants had

been initiated years ago, how many O'Donnells and Murphys and Kennedys would still be Catholic!)

Some compare the leakage to a trickle; others to a waterfall. Whatever the truth may be, it must be stopped, or if not stopped, at least diminished. To that end, no scheme is too insignificant, no method offers too slender a hope of possible fruitfulness, provided of course that the result is in some proportion to the effort. While one deprecates forms of all sorts, this work of closer co-operation requires only the small effort involved in duplicating a number of forms to cover the appropriate case. From then on the work is slight: a moment for filling it in, a 1½d. stamp, the post-box.

Priests sometimes feel a little despondent over the negative aspect of so much of their work. Such time is spent in preventing their flock from straying that there is little opportunity or energy left for the positive effort of increasing its size. It is often forgotten that this negative work of consolidation has a direct influence on the conversion of this country. We are all familiar with the old cry: "If all the Catholics who had lapsed in the last twenty years were to return to their Faith, this country would be half way to total conversion."

Those of us who are concerned with normal unspectacular pastoral duties should not feel discouraged at the negative aspect of our work. In its eventual consequences it is far less negative than it seems.

ANTHONY F. BULLEN

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### EUCCHARISTIC FAST—FREQUENCY OF PERMITTED DRINKS

On a Saturday evening, Mr A. is assured by his confessor that he may take a cup of tea at least an hour before receiving Holy Communion at a late Mass the following morning. Some friends call shortly after midnight and, just to be sociable, he

joins them in a cup of tea which he does not really need. (i) May he receive Holy Communion without further recourse to a confessor? (ii) Does this post-midnight drink rule out a second cup of tea, when he rises at 7.30 a.m.? (iii) Leaving this post-midnight cup of tea out of account, may he take a cup of tea at 5 a.m. and again at 7.30 a.m. on the same "permission"? (J. O. H.)

### REPLY

Though the idea may be widespread among the faithful in this land of tea-addicts, the Pope did not say that, in certain circumstances, they can have "a cup of tea" before communicating. He said: "aliquid sumere possunt per modum potus, exclusis alcoholicis".<sup>1</sup> The use of the word "aliquid" would seem to imply the need or at least the desirability of moderation, but it does not even implicitly limit the drink, whether of tea or any other non-alcoholic liquid, to a single cup, or even to a single occasion. It is true that the Holy Office Instruction, in n.6, expressly says of priests that they may take something to drink "semel vel pluries", and fails to add this clause in its commentary on the concession to other categories; but one cannot legitimately conclude from this omission that only priests may take a drink more than once. If that were so, the infirm and the laity would at once be exposed to all sorts of scruples as to what length of interval turns one drink into two. Since the legislator must be presumed not to have willed this, and the concession to the infirm and the laity is not limited by any clause such as "una vice" or "semel", the correct conclusion is surely that the quantity of liquid and the number of separate drinks is left to the individual's own prudent judgement, guided by the spirit of the law.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit of the law, as expressed in the preamble, is: "ut ii solummodo, qui in necessitate versentur, hisce concessionibus frui possint secundum eiusdem necessitatis rationes". We say "the spirit of the law", because, although these words are

<sup>1</sup> *Christus Dominus*, Norm V; Holy Office Instruction, n. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ford, *The New Eucharistic Legislation*, p. 78.

imperative in tone, they are not repeated even equivalently in the dispositive part of the Constitution, and therefore do not clearly set a statutory limit to the number of drinks or the quantity of liquid that may be taken. The answer to our correspondent's three questions is, therefore, in the affirmative to the first, in the negative to the second, and in the affirmative to the third. Once Mr A. has qualified for the use of the concession, he is not *forbidden* to take a cup of tea before retiring, as well as another one or two in the morning; and if he would prefer something more nourishing in the morning, he is free to substitute a bowl of soup, as long as it is all consumable *per modum potus*. There were enough scruples under the old discipline, and it would be a pity to start them again by making so elastic a thing as "need" the strict measure of the quantity or number of the permitted drinks.

#### HOLY COMMUNION AT HOME WHEN NOT INFIRM

When Holy Communion is taken to a sick person, may other members of his household receive it at the same time? What is the position, in this respect, of Catholic nurses in a general hospital? (T. B.)

#### REPLY

Canon 869: "Sacra communio distribui potest ubicunque Missam celebrare licet, etiam in oratorio privato, nisi loci Ordinarius, iustis de causis, in casibus particularibus id prohibuerit."

Canon 822, §1: "Missa celebranda est super altare consecratum et in ecclesia vel oratorio consecrato aut benedicto ad normam iuris . . ."

§4: "Loci Ordinarius . . . licentiam celebrandi extra ecclesiam et oratorium supra petram sacram et decenti loco, numquam autem in cubiculo, concedere potest iusta tantum ac rationabili de causa, in aliquo extraordinario casu et per modum actus."



i. The common law allows Holy Communion to be taken to the infirm in their own homes, or wherever they are detained by their infirmity.<sup>1</sup> The term infirmity covers not only sickness, but old age and any other physical disability which prevents the person affected from communicating in the normal place. If, therefore, this can reasonably be said of any member of the sick person's household, he or she may lawfully be given Holy Communion at the same time, or even independently, though it should not be administered in a bedroom, if that can be reasonably avoided.

For others than the infirm, the rule is that Holy Communion may be distributed only where Mass may be celebrated (canon 869). Now, according to canon 822, §1, the normal place for the celebration of Mass is a consecrated or blessed church or oratory; but, by §4 of the same canon, for a just and reasonable cause and in an extraordinary case, the local Ordinary can give leave, *per modum actus*, for Mass to be celebrated in some other decent place (including a suitable room in a private house), though never in a bedroom. It follows therefore that, with the same limitations, he can permit Holy Communion to be given, in a private house, to persons who are not otherwise entitled to have it brought to them there. This conclusion was confirmed by a reply of the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments, 5 January 1928, which answered the question by a simple application of the canons collated above.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, since this power is attached to the Ordinary's office by law, he can delegate a pastor or other priest to exercise it in his behalf.<sup>3</sup> Leave may only be given *per modum actus*, but this does not mean that it must be renewed for every single distribution of Communion; merely that it may only be given for a temporary reason of short duration.<sup>4</sup>

It follows equally that, without such leave, the non-infirm may not be given Communion, when it is brought to a sick person in the same household, and that, even when leave is given, it does not *per se* warrant their reception of Communion in a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. canons 847-49.

<sup>2</sup> A.A.S., 1928, XX, p. 79; Bouscaren, *Digest*, I, p. 371.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. canons 197, §1, and 199, §1.

<sup>4</sup> Cappello, *De Sacramentis*, ed. 1950, I, n. 709, suggests eight to ten days at a time, but adds that it can be renewed several times, unless the reason seems likely to last a long time, in which case recourse must be had to the Holy See.

bedroom. A few authors, however, admit the appeal to *epikeia*, in the case of a healthy person who has charge of the sick person and cannot very well leave him to come to church.<sup>1</sup>

ii. *Per se*, the position of Catholic nurses in a hospital is no different from that of other healthy persons in a private house. If, however, they have a blessed oratory permanently dedicated to Catholic worship, though without Reservation, no special leave would seem to be required in order to give them Communion there, during the permitted hours, when the Blessed Sacrament is brought to the hospital for administration to the sick. Strictly speaking, this does not apply to a mere room occasionally used for Mass by special leave of the Ordinary, except when Mass is being celebrated there, or the Ordinary has specially allowed the room to be used for the distribution of Communion, on a particular occasion. Nevertheless, we feel that *epikeia* can be reasonably invoked here also, if some of the nurses will otherwise be prevented by their duties from getting to Communion.

#### BAPTIZED POLYGAMIST'S CHOICE OF WIVES

Can we follow in practice the opinion of some authors (Winslow, *The Pauline Privilege*, nn. 114, 117, 119; Cance, *Le Code de Droit Canonique*, ed. 1951, II, n. 420; Boudon, *Le Privilege Paulin*, ed. 1949, p. 54; La Revue du Clergé Africain, July 1955, p. 322) who say that, by virtue of the Constitution *Romani Pontificis*, a baptized convert polygamist can marry his second or third wife who is to be baptized with him, even though his first wife is known and already baptized? Cappello, in his new edition of *De Matrimonio*, n. 787, 4, is against this opinion; and Vromant, *De Matrimonio*, n. 345, and Vermeersch-Creusen, *Epitome*, ed. 1954, II, n. 436, say that in practice recourse must be had to the Holy See. It seems to me that there is sufficient doubt to "favour the faith" according to canon 1127, without any recourse to the Holy See. (Missionarius.)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jorio, *Theologia Moralis*, III, n. 134; Aertnys-Damen, *Theologia Moralis*, II, n. 129, 2; Mahoney, *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, December 1940, p. 547, *Questions and Answers*, I, qu. 158. Fanfani admits *epikeia* in regard to the reception of Communion in a bedroom; *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, IV, n. 175, C.

## REPLY

Canon 1125: "Ea quae matrimonium respiciunt in constitutionibus Pauli III *Altitudo*, 1 Iun. 1537; S.Pii V *Romani Pontificis*, 2 Aug. 1571; Gregorii XIII *Populis*, 25 Ian. 1585, quaeque pro peculiaribus locis scripta sunt, ad alias quoque regiones in eisdem adiunctis extenduntur."

S.Pii V, Const. *Romani Pontificis* (Appendix to Code, Docum. VII): "... sed quia durissimum esset separare eos ab uxoribus, cum quibus ipsi Indi baptismum susceperunt, maxime quia difficillimum foret primam coniugem reperire: ideo Nos, statui dictorum Indorum paterno affectu benigne consulere, atque ipsos Episcopos et ministros ab huiusmodi scrupulis eximere volentes, motu proprio et ex certa scientia Nostra, ac apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, ut Indi, sic ut praemittitur baptizati, et in futurum baptizandi, cum uxore, quae cum ipsis fuerit baptizata et baptizabitur, remanere valeant, tamquam cum uxore legitima, aliis dimissis, apostolica auctoritate, tenore praesentium, declaramus, matrimoniumque huiusmodi inter eos legitime consistere, etc."

This is an extremely difficult question such as any private interpreter of the law would be fully justified in evading; but it is no use merely referring our correspondent to approved authors, for it is evident that he has already consulted them. All we can say with certainty, after a fairly thorough study of the history and present state of the question, is that Ordinaries will never be able confidently to apply canon 1125 for themselves, as the Code intended them to do, until the present series of inconsistent private replies and faculties from the Roman curia is replaced by a comprehensive and authentic interpretation determining the precise limits and conditions of the three papal Constitutions involved. Meanwhile, the only thing that is clear from the plain wording of the canon is that the dispositions contained in these Constitutions are nowadays part of the common law of the universal Church.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cappello, *De Sacramentis*, ed. 1950, V, *De Matrimonio*, n. 787, p. 775. Even this statement did not go unquestioned, but the more recent commentators seem to be generally agreed on it.

It is less clear which of the clauses in *Romani Pontificis* are to be regarded as conditions strictly required for its valid use. To judge however from the text itself, which should always be the primary criterion, though it has not commonly been so treated during these past four centuries,<sup>1</sup> there would seem to be only one clearly stipulated condition, i.e. that the chosen "wife" be herself baptized when the convert polygamist contracts Christian marriage with her. Of the other two clauses (that it would be very hard for him to leave her, and that it may be very difficult for him to find his first wife), both can be reasonably interpreted as mere *causae impulsivae*, though for various reasons it is perhaps wiser to treat the former as a condition.<sup>2</sup> That there are at most two conditions necessary to the valid use of *Romani Pontificis* is admittedly not the impression one would gather from the curial interpretation of the Constitution, more especially before the Code, but, as Coronata rightly observes, the Code extended the Constitution to the universal Church "prout ipsa a S. Pio V emanavit, non prout fuit restrictiva postea a S. Officio interpretata".<sup>3</sup>

Provided then that his chosen "wife" is baptized when he marries her, and that it would be very hard for him to leave her, the polygamist is dispensed *ipso iure* from the twofold interpellation which would be required, if it were a question of the Pauline Privilege, and the couple can be baptized and married without further ado. Moreover, according to an opinion, based on the words of the Constitution, which is rapidly becoming more common and is safe in practice, the same applies even when the first wife is known and, indeed, willing to be baptized.<sup>4</sup> This reading of the text was confirmed by the reply given, in 1924, to the First Council of China.<sup>5</sup> The Council's petition contrasted the restrictive clause, "nisi prima voluerit converti", which was attached to the faculty received by Chinese Ordinaries from the Holy Office, with the unconditional concession made by *Romani Pontificis*, in which there was no question of previous interpellations; and it asked whether,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rayanna, *Periodica* 1938, XXVII, p. 295 ff; 1939, XXVIII, p. 25 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Coronata, *De Sacramentis*, III, n. 648, p. 905.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 906.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. De Reeper, *A Missionary Companion*, p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bouscaren, *Digest*, III, p. 478.

"according to the mind of the Constitution", Ordinaries could allow the polygamist to be baptized and marry "absolutely and without any interpellation of the first wife". The answer was in the affirmative; and a similar answer was given to a similar question from the First Plenary Council of India, held in 1950, at Bangalore.<sup>1</sup> It is true that other private replies have required Ordinaries to approach the Holy See in every case not covered by their special but more restricted faculties.<sup>2</sup> Since, however, neither the Chinese nor the Indian Council had sought an extension of their faculty, but merely that they be allowed to act according to the common law of the Constitution, the replies, which they received and which simply conceded what they asked confirm the common view that, according to the terms of the Constitution, the will of the first wife need not be investigated; and if this is true of India and China, it is true of any other region where the application of the common law has not been positively restricted.<sup>3</sup>

As long therefore as the first wife remains a pagan or catechumen, we consider it morally certain that the Constitution can be applied without recourse to the Holy See. But the question posed by our correspondent is whether the same is true, if the first wife *has already received baptism* when the polygamist and his chosen "wife", themselves now baptized, seek to use the concession. The first wife's baptism substantially changes the situation, because, at the moment when the polygamist follows her into the Church, their former *matrimonium legitimum* becomes a *matrimonium ratum*.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, assuming that they have not lived together since they both became Christians, it is

<sup>1</sup> Holy Office, 26 March 1952, S.C.P.F., 19 April 1952; De Reeper, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Holy Office, 30 June 1937, to Indo-China (Bouscaren, *Digest*, III, p. 480; 21 October 1938, to the Belgian Congo (Vermeersch-Creusen, *Epitome*, ed. 1954, II, n. 436).

<sup>3</sup> Cappello (loc. cit., p. 777), while conceding that the polygamist need not interpellate his first wife and can use the concession even if she spontaneously declares her willingness to be converted, rather inconsistently denies him the right to do so, if she responds affirmatively to a voluntary interpellation. We agree with Rayanna (loc. cit., p. 51) that there is no juridical reason for distinguishing between the two cases. As the Chinese reply admits, the Constitution grants to the polygamist the right to marry the "wife" who is converted with him, and from whom he would find it very hard to separate, "absolutely", i.e. without further condition.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. canon 1015.

not *ratum et consummatum* (of which alone canon 1118 predicates absolute indissolubility), because there has been no consummation of the sacramental marriage, only of the infidel marriage. Now, it is generally agreed among modern authors that the Holy Father can and does dissolve marriages of this kind.<sup>1</sup> The question is: does he do so, *ipso iure*, through *Romani Pontificis*, as he does, at least *ad cautelam*, through *Populis*?

It must be confessed that, apart from the few authors quoted by our correspondent, to whom we can add De Reeper,<sup>2</sup> there is comparatively little open support for the affirmative answer. Of the other authors whom we have consulted, only Cappello deals with the question and he returns a flat negative. Nevertheless, the intrinsic argument based on the text of the Constitution is positively probable. St Pius clearly intended to do something out of the ordinary, for he invoked "the plenitude of the apostolic authority", and the concession he made was unqualified by any restriction regarding the desire of baptism or actual baptism of the first wife. As De Reeper observes: "No right is granted to the first wife to interfere with the application of the Constitution. Neither her wish to live in peace with the convert, nor her wish to be baptized, nor the fact that she is perhaps baptized already, need be taken into account."<sup>3</sup> Vermeersch-Creusen admit that the text of the Constitution favours the affirmative answer, but add that the Holy See must none the less be approached in every case, because of the practice of the Holy Office and the serious danger of scandal.<sup>4</sup> This reservation seems to us unwarranted. There have admittedly been private and particular rulings of the Holy Office with which the affirmative answer cannot easily be reconciled; but, in the first place, they are too variable to provide a clear guide, and secondly, being private, they cannot avail against the argument from the text of the common law, except perhaps in those regions to which they were addressed. The significant fact is that the affirmative answer has never yet been excluded by an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cappello, loc. cit., p. 786; Bouscaren-Ellis, *Canon Law*, p. 619; Heylen, *De Matrimonio*, p. 350; Wouters, *Theol. Mor.*, II, n. 720; etc.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., p. 218. Canon 1119 likewise provides for the dissolution of an unconsummated marriage, "etsi altera sit invita".

<sup>4</sup> Loc. cit., n. 436.

authentic interpretation or general decree to the contrary. As to the danger of scandal, there is no reason to suppose that local Ordinaries are not as able to provide against it in this as in other cases.

Our hesitant conclusion, encouraged by the principle of canon 1127, "in re dubia privilegium fidei gaudet favore iuris", is that, in areas which have received no special ruling to the contrary, the affirmative opinion is sufficiently probable to be safely applied with the simple approval of the local Ordinary.

#### ATTENDANCE AT DEANERY CONFERENCES

May one hold, as a general principle, that attendance at Conferences is obligatory only on confessors, this apparently being the *finis legis*? (A. B.)

#### REPLY

Canon 131, §3: "Conventui interesse, aut, deficiente conventu, scriptam casuum solutionem mittere debent, nisi a loci Ordinario exemptionem antea expresse obtinuerint, tum omnes sacerdotes saeculares, tum religiosi licet exempti curam animarum habentes et etiam, si collatio in eorum domibus non habeatur, alii religiosi qui facultatem audiendi confessiones ab Ordinario obtinuerunt."

To fulfil a law, it is not necessary to intend the purpose intended by the legislator, unless, as in recitation of the canonical hours, this be required for the substantial fulfilment of the work prescribed.<sup>1</sup> Hence the adage: "Finis legis non cadit sub lege." On the other hand, it is not sufficient merely to ensure that the *finis legis* is achieved. To quote Rodrigo: "Id totum et solum a subdito praestandum est pro legis adimplemento quod est materia seu obiectum legis vel praecepti."<sup>2</sup> If therefore the matter

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rodrigo, *De Legibus*, n. 293; St Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, Ia IIae, qu. 100, a. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., n. 283.



or object of an affirmative or preceptive law is simply the production of a thing, the law is fulfilled as soon as the thing is produced, no matter by whom; and so, for example, it is a matter of indifference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to who pays John Doe's income tax, as long as it is paid. But when the matter or object of the law is a personal act, nothing but a human act of the person concerned will satisfy; and so it is that Mrs Doe cannot fulfil her own and her husband's Sunday obligation by going to Mass twice. The *finis legis*, i.e. the worship of God, may be equally or even better attained by the fervent Mrs Doe's attendance in church, but it is John's bodily and mental presence that the Church demands.

Now, it is quite clear from the wording that canon 131 is a personal law; indeed, it is at pains to determine precisely who must attend the deanery conferences. Among the secular clergy, no exception is admitted, save that of express exemption by the local Ordinary; and it is only in respect of one category of Religious (i.e. those who have neither care of souls nor a conference in their own houses) that the obligation is made dependent on the holding of confessional faculties from the Ordinary. It is true that, in practice, the other two categories (i.e. all secular priests and Religious who have care of souls) will commonly have confessional faculties; but one may not hold, *as a general principle*, that this is the sole criterion of obligation. On the contrary, those Religious who have confessional faculties, without care of souls, are exempt from the deanery conferences, if similar conferences are held in their own houses; and a secular priest, or Religious with care of souls, from whom confessional faculties have been withheld or withdrawn, is not thereby exempted or dispensed from the obligation; indeed, this very circumstance may indicate his special need to observe it.

L. L. McR.

#### THE COMMUNION CLOTH

Is the law prescribing the use of a linen cloth for the faithful at Holy Communion no longer of obligation? (S. J.)

## REPLY

The use of a Communion cloth as prescribed in the *Ritus Celebrandi* of the Missal (X, 6), the Roman Ritual (V, ii, 1), and the Ceremonial of Bishops (II, xxix, 3) remains of obligation. When the Congregation of the Sacraments in its Instruction of 26 March 1929 prescribed the use of a Communion plate, it expressly ordered that the Communion cloth was to be maintained. This is for traditional and symbolic reasons, the Communion rail is really regarded as a continuation of the altar "of which we partake" (cf. the prayer *Supplices* after the Consecration) when we receive Communion as the completion of the sacrifice. The cloth also recalls the fact that Communion is a sharing in a meal. The Ceremonial prescribes the cloth—for Communion of both clergy and laity—even at a pontifical Mass, when the subdeacon holds the paten under the chin of each communicant. While the retention of the cloth is chiefly for symbolic reasons, it still fulfils its former practical purpose of serving to catch any particle of a Host that may escape the Communion plate. The cloth should, of course, now lie flat on the top of the rail, and not any longer be held by the communicant.

J. B. O'C.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Missel Biblique de Tous les Jours*. Pp. 1950. (Editions Tardy, 1955.)

ONE result of the steady advance of the "liturgical movement"—the attempt, under the aegis of the Holy See, to make known to the people the Sacred Liturgy and promote their active participation in it—has been the increase in the use of the Roman Missal in the vernacular by the laity. The number of Latin-vernacular missals that has appeared within the last half century, and especially within the last decade, is phenomenal, and each new edition marks an advance in editing and production. There are many points that require skill and careful attention in the editing of a missal, but by far the most important of these, in a vernacular missal, is the trans-

lation—that it be faithful, intelligible and literary. Until recently it was this part of missal production that was most neglected. The editors were hampered by imperfect versions of the Bible, and even more imperfect translations of the prayers were copied from missal to missal. Happily all this has been changed. Vastly better versions of the Bible are now available, and much attention is being given to the translation of the missal texts, and a number of new versions, independent of one another, have appeared in recent years. France, in particular, is remarkable for the selection of excellent missals that is now available for the laity; and their editors have been greatly helped by the publication of a French translation of the Order and Canon of Mass made by a group of eminent scholars (among them Canon F. Boulard, editor-in-chief of *Missel Biblique*), under the patronage of Le Centre de Pastorale Liturgique of Paris. This translation has now become the standard one in France and is adopted by the editors of most editions of a vernacular missal. Recent editions of missals have not only made a great advance in quality, they have also greatly increased in bulk, becoming miniature liturgical encyclopaedias (whether this is desirable or not is a moot point).

In all respects the *Missel Biblique* has reached this very high standard of missal production, and indeed far exceeded it in some ways. It is a remarkable and most admirable book; and it is impossible to do it justice within the brief compass of a short review. It was prepared—with, obviously, the most meticulous care concerning every detail—by a distinguished panel of scholars under the direction of Canon F. Boulard.

The editors of this missal, believing that often a missal may be the only religious book in a layman's library, have made the *Missel Biblique* as complete as possible. It is not only a Mass book, but also in part a Vespéral, and a Ritual (containing a section on each of the seven sacraments); it has also private prayers—but all of a liturgical character—and provides for such quasi-liturgical practices of piety as the Way of the Cross.

The Sacred Liturgy makes extensive use of biblical texts and a certain knowledge of Sacred Scripture is indispensable for anyone wishing to use the missal intelligently and fruitfully. And so *Missel Biblique*, in accordance with its name, provides a course of biblical culture, e.g. there is an excellent section on the Psalms—some ninety of them are given in the translation of the Bible of Jerusalem, with appropriate comments. Each Introit has its appropriate introduction. The missal has even a biblical, as well as a liturgical, glossary, and maps, to illustrate the sacred books, and a most useful

table of the passages of Sacred Scripture used throughout the missal.

The translation of all the scriptural parts of the missal is from the up-to-date, excellent version of the Bible of Jerusalem. That of the prayers is of a very high standard also, taking full account of the purpose of a vernacular missal, its use by the laity. And all this wealth of liturgical texts and information is, with great skill, packed into a book not more bulky than a good sized prayer-book. For anyone who uses a French missal the *Missel Biblique* will prove a treasure.

J. B. O'C.

*The Shrine of St Peter and the Vatican Excavations.* By Jocelyn Toynbee and John Ward Perkins. (Longmans. 42s.)

THE Professor of Classical Archaeology in the University of Cambridge and the Director of the British School at Rome have collaborated in this handsome and impressive book to explain the excavations and to describe the discoveries underneath St Peter's. Miss Toynbee is a Catholic and Mr Ward Perkins is not, but the result of their work is as harmonious and agreeable as it is thorough and scholarly in presenting—though it does not purport to solve—the problem of the Apostolic Shrine. Part I, half of the book, contains a full account of the newly uncovered Vatican Cemetery, its architecture and art and even a discussion of the social position, etc., of those who were buried there. Part II deals with the Petrine Tradition, describes the pre-Constantinian Shrine, the building of Constantine's church (Old St Peter's), and the later history of the Shrine; and there follows an epilogue on the influence of Old St Peter's on the ecclesiastical architecture of Western Europe. Immense pains have been taken to make the extremely complicated and more or less technical matter as intelligible as possible to the general reader; notes and references abound; Greek and Latin passages (and phrases) are translated and explained. The book is superbly illustrated with thirty-two plates which are said to be superior to those of the Official Report.

Since the sixteenth century it has been known that the great church stands on the site of a Roman cemetery, but little was known with any certainty and there was much dependence on misleading traditions. The occasion for the excavations in the crypt was the preparation of a tomb for Pius XI. Then came the discoveries which gave rise to more extensive excavations. Below the traces of the pavement of Old St Peter's was a complete Roman cemetery, both Pagan and Christian, with a series of rich house-tombs with sar-

cophagi enriched with sculpture, mosaic and painted stucco work, arranged along both sides of a sort of street. But, as the ground sloped steeply, the builders of the great new church were under the necessity of constructing a level platform for its floor. To do this they had to cut off the tops of many of the tombs and they packed the interiors with a million cubic feet of earth. This enormous and extraordinary operation, involving the utterly illegal violation of an important cemetery, was obviously undertaken for one reason only: to erect the church over the tomb of the Apostle. A tiny shrine (the *aedicula* shown on the dust-cover of the book), built into the wall of a tomb enclosure, was believed to mark the grave of St Peter and therefore the church was planned and built so that this grave would be its focal point. The church was built about A.D. 324, but the *aedicula* is believed to date from about A.D. 160, and, moreover, it is the *tropaion* described some forty years later by the priest Gaius. Whether this little shrine stood exactly over the actual grave or not, its existence is clear archaeological evidence of the cult of the Apostle on the Vatican and therefore of his residence and martyrdom in Rome.

The *Liber Pontificalis* states that Gregory the Great made it possible to celebrate Mass over the body of St Peter, and Gregory of Tours gives a description of the devotions of pilgrims at the Shrine. "The tomb," he says, "is placed *sub altare* and is carefully set apart. But whoso wishes to pray, for him the doors that give access to the place are unbolted and he enters the precinct over the tomb and a small window is opened and placing his head within he asks for whatever he requires." Then, through a hole in the floor, a cloth would be lowered to be sanctified by contact with the tomb.

Until the time of Marsilius of Padua nobody had ever questioned that St Peter's remains lay directly below the high altar in a great bronze coffin said to have been given by Constantine. But no such thing has been found. The space below the Niche of the Pallia was found by the excavators smashed and ransacked with a heap of bones swept into a corner. As the space below the shrine had been inaccessible, nobody knows now what has been lost. In 846 the Saracens raided Rome. "They invaded and occupied the church . . . committing unspeakable iniquities." We learn further from a mediaeval annalist that "they sacked the church of the Blessed Peter and bore off all the ornaments and treasures together with the very altar which had been placed in the tomb". Whatever was the extent of the loss and damage was not thereafter disclosed. "The hole in the pavement was repaired," say the present authors, "and the life of the shrine went on as before."

It is disappointing that the Official Report has given no authoritative information about the bones. In four years a medical report could surely have been prepared, stating their number, nature, and the parts of the body from which they come. A statement appears to have been made by one of the excavators that they appear to be those of a person of advanced age and powerful physique; but precise information has not been forthcoming. "Do they represent," ask the authors of the present work, "some portion of a body which the early Roman Church revered as that of St Peter? We must be content to leave all these questions unanswered and to admit today that we cannot identify with any certainty the Apostle's bones."

Thus the strange story told by Lanciani in his *Pagan and Christian Rome* must be dismissed. He wrote that when in 1594 Giacomo della Porta was levelling the floor of the church above the Confessio, the ground gave way, and he saw through the opening what nobody had beheld since the time of Sergius II—the grave of St Peter and upon it the golden cross of Constantine. On hearing of the discovery, Pope Clement VIII, accompanied by three cardinals, descended to the Confessio and saw with his own eyes the cross inscribed with the names of Constantine and Helena. But if that had been there in 1594 it would have been there in 1944.

Although no sarcophagus or bronze tomb or gold cross has come to light, the Pope has accepted in substance the excavators' conclusions and he declared publicly, early in 1949, that under the central point of the gigantic cupola of the Vatican Basilica was and is the place of St Peter's burial.

J. J. DWYER

*I Want to See God. A Practical Synthesis of Carmelite Spirituality.* Vol. I. *I Am a Daughter of the Church. A Practical Synthesis of Carmelite Spirituality.* Vol. II.

Both by P. Marie-Eugène, O.C.D. Translated by Sister M. Verda Clare, C.S.C. Pp. xxii + 549 and xxvii + 667. (Cork: The Mercier Press. 21s. each.)

A GROUP of laymen who aspired to live a deeper interior life prompted the conferences cast into a more literary form in these volumes. The laymen expressed a preference for an exposition of St John of the Cross; but P. Marie-Eugène chose St Teresa, chiefly because he considered that no account of the ascent of the soul to God is more practical and shows more psychological insight than her masterpiece, "The Interior Castle". Into her teaching he has woven the teaching of St John of the Cross. P. Marie-Eugène is a masterly

exponent, completely at home in the writings of the two saints and in the theology of the spiritual life.

The first volume covers in the main the first three Mansions of the Interior Castle; it discusses the individual approach to God and explains what this entails in the matter of resolution of will, self-giving, humility, recollection and so on, in order that the soul may become increasingly subject to the control of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The second volume embraces the other four Mansions. The author intended by the title to emphasize the fact that contemplation has an apostolic purpose, that the contemplative lives, prays and suffers in and for the Church, is subservient to her dogmas, and finds his highest fulfilment individually and socially as a vital member of the Whole Christ. St Teresa and St John of the Cross would entirely repudiate the theory that dogma and institutionalism are alien to mysticism and that a vague sense of union with the All is the only genuine essence of religion.

The Archbishop of Boston contributes a message to this second volume. He considers it a most heartening thing that there is, in these days, a public which will read a book such as this. Undoubtedly this is so; for the book does not mince matters. It sets out the unitive way and tells of the price that must be paid in the nights of the sense and of the spirit, in absolute asceticism and in full union of the human will with God's, if the soul is to get beyond the more trodden ways of the prayer of quiet and scale the lonely heights of transforming union.

Those who really know their St Teresa will not perhaps find anything very new in P. Marie-Eugène's commentary. But they will appreciate the sureness of his touch and particularly the sound practical guidance which he offers stage by stage; he is an experienced mountaineer, who knows all the difficulties and the dangers and the line of approach by which they can be surmounted. He has definite views on speculative problems; for instance, on the universality of the call to contemplation. But those views are drawn from the two authorities whom he is following. He thus keeps a single eye and escapes unprofitable discussion which would not promote the practical good he aims at. To give point and emphasis to his guidance he introduces St Thérèse of Lisieux as being the surest of guides to the ascent of Mount Carmel.

Completeness and the stamp of authority—these give to P. Marie-Eugène's two volumes a definitive importance for all who would live more interiorly. His work should find a place among one's treasured spiritual books. The English translation by an American



nun has been competently done; and the American production is handsome. But an index is called for; the detailed table of contents, excellent though it is, is not adequate.

*The Confessions of St Augustine.* (Burns Oates. 15s.)

*A Book of Spiritual Instruction.* By Ludovicus Blossius. (Burns Oates. 10s. 6d.)

*Manual of Interior Souls.* By John Nicholas Grou, S.J. (Burns Oates. 15s.)

THESE are three notable additions to the Orchard Books of Spiritual Classics. *The Confessions* is in the translation of Sir Tobie Matthew of 1620, the first to be made in English, to which most subsequent translations, including Doctor Pusey's, have been much indebted. The translation was of high literary merit; but it was not always accurate, owing partly to the defective text of St Augustine which Sir Tobie Matthew used and partly also to his own occasional misconceptions of St Augustine's meaning. Dom Roger Hudleston, O.S.B., who edits the present edition, has carefully corrected the translation, using the best critical text of the original. He has also eliminated the traces of controversial bias in which the translator indulged, understandably perhaps, considering the times in which he lived and his situation as the convert priest son of the Archbishop of York. This edition is a reprint, the sixth since its first publication in 1923, which is a striking testimony to the perennial appeal of Sir Tobie Matthew's rendering of the greatest of spiritual autobiographies.

Blossius' *Institutio Spiritualis* is one of the earliest attempts to draw up a science of mysticism. But it is by no means purely speculative; it is the fruit of over twenty years' experience as an abbot in difficult times and of much knowledge of the needs and problems of souls, and therefore it has a practical appeal, not only for the religious for whom it was primarily intended, but for all who seek closer union with God. The style is less involved and grandiose than that of many of Blossius' contemporaries. The spirit is naturally Benedictine, but strongly influenced by what was then known as *Devotio Moderna* and, in contemplative matters, by the Rhineland Mystics, especially the Dominican, John Tauler. The present translation was originally made by Father Bertrand Wilberforce, O.P., in 1900. The editor, a Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, has corrected it where necessary, modernized the style in places, and contributed an entirely new preface, explaining Blossius' history and background in the light of the most recent research.

The *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* describes Grou as "one of the most eminent and best beloved masters of the interior life". His *Manual* is the best known and most popular of his writings. Its theme is the love of God, issuing through fidelity to self-denial and the practice of virtue in complete abandonment to Divine Providence and in a simple contemplative prayer of faith. The influence of St Francis de Sales, Cardinal de Bérulle and Fénelon can be detected in this and others of Grou's writings; but, as the present editor, Father Donal O'Sullivan, S. J., insists, against Bremond, their basic character is Ignatian. The translation reproduced in this edition is, with a few emendations, that made by J. G. W. in 1889 and often reprinted since.

J. C.

*The Apparition at Knock.* By Rev. Michael Walsh. Pp. 136. (Leinster Press, Kildare. 5s.)

UNTIL the Apparition in 1879 Knock, a remote village in County Mayo, was unknown. It has since become one of the famous shrines of our Lady, a popular place of pilgrimage for the devout: during the Marian Year one concourse numbered no fewer than fifty thousand men and women. Not everyone accepts what so many claim for this Irish shrine. It has a note of incompleteness, as though the impression of the divine seal is not clear to the eyes of all beholders; and yet there are unmistakable signs that Knock is among the holy places of Mary's own choosing.

Numerous cures, so extraordinary as to be deemed miracles, immediately followed the Apparition, causing the Archbishop of the diocese to appoint a commission of enquiry. The original documents of this enquiry are not extant, but the evidence taken was retaken later from reputable witnesses, some of them appearing repeatedly before successive boards of investigation conducted in so severe a manner as to be perhaps over-cautious. In the earlier days of Knock's history most priests in the diocese were sceptical and some of them openly hostile. Worse still, the unfortunate "Nun of Kenmare" brought suspicion upon the place by going to reside there with the intention of making a foundation for her religious Institute, and by taking too exuberant an interest in supposed manifestations of the supernatural. This woman, Miss Cusack, was a convert at the time of the Oxford Movement. She went from London to Newry, where she was clothed as a Poor Clare a year after her reception into the Church. Having caused much trouble in Ireland she migrated to Nottingham, where she intended forming a new Order. For this she obtained papal approbation, travelling to Rome for the

purpose. She then went to America, but fell foul of the Bishops, left her Order and left the Church, although it appears that she showed signs of repentance before her death.

Today it is abundantly clear that Miss Cusack's connexion with Knock was nothing but a disturbance from outside, that the sceptical clergy were unreasonably wary, and that the witnesses of the Apparition were none of them fanatical. Knock is an unspoiled shrine of quite extraordinary piety and genuine Catholic devotion. Moreover, it is the scene of miracles; and after all, what we look for in deciding whether or not we are in the presence of the supernatural at places like Knock is the authentic manifestation of the miraculous.

*Saint Philomena.* By Sister M. H. Mohr: *The Curé d'Ars.* By Paul Doncoeur. Pp. 160. (Clonmore & Reynolds and Burns Oates. 9s. 6d.)

Few saints have in modern times had so extraordinary a vogue as St Philomena, and none has more strikingly attested the miraculous; she was given by Pope Gregory XVI the title "Wonder-worker of the Nineteenth Century". Her tomb and mortal remains (with a phial of her blood) were discovered in the catacomb of St Priscilla in the year 1802, everything then unearthed pointing to her being a Virgin Martyr, probably of the time of Diocletian. There are no original records of her life; as Henri Ghéon says, her case is unparalleled in the history of the Church, an "unknown" being raised to the altars. This holy child's power with God clamoured for recognition by the innumerable miracles wrought at her intercession. The author of this brief Life does not attempt the impossible—an exhaustive list of the miracles, but she does describe many, choosing those of an uncommon kind such as the cure demonstrated to the people of Mugnano, when a gurgling baby was dangled from the pulpit, and that of the old anti-clerical rascal Angelo who was instantaneously and completely cured of his gout.

It is not that Sister Mohr has endeavoured to set a new fashion in hagiography, but that she has written this Life as she would have written a lively magazine article. Occasionally she allows her pen to run away with her. "News of the crippled child's cure grapevined through the village": it didn't, for it spread like wildfire, and a grapevine gets along very slowly indeed. Referring to the Saint's shrine near London, the author says: "The religious element in Pinner is heightened and enlivened by the annual Derby." The "little Queen of Hearts" after the transportation of her embalmed body "perks up looking lovely". But if the style of the work is so

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unexpected as to make the book somewhat too disturbing for spiritual reading, the informative element is most satisfying.

The short account—not twenty pages—of the *Curé d'Ars* is a gem, rounding off aptly the story of St Philomena, whom the saintly priest loved. The salient facts of his life are given, with some little-known miracles which occurred at his touch. St John Vianney was a daily edification to those around him, from his babyhood until his death; and it is readily understood why he was given to priests as their special patron by the Pope who beatified him, St Pius X. As the *Curé's* fame increases, the small statue of his kneeling figure appears more and more in presbyteries. Ars is among the quieter places of pilgrimage visited by a growing number of the clergy.

*Father Charles of Mount Argus.* By Father Christopher, C.P. Pp. ix + 158. (Gill & Son, Dublin. 6s. 6d.)

SIGNS and wonders attested the holiness of Father Charles for the entire duration of his ministry, a ministry that was exercised in the unspectacular, ordinary, humdrum fashion that falls to the lot of most of God's priests. This saintly Passionist was born in the Netherlands, but except for a few years in England he spent his priestly life at Mount Argus, Dublin, where he died sixty years ago at the age of seventy-two. Those who lived in his community spoke of him as an old man long before his years would ordinarily have made him so. Austerities and mortifications, practised from youth, aged him prematurely. When finally his body broke down in death he would have liked to step out of this world into the next with no more stir than is made by a Requiem Mass; but the people couldn't allow that. They loudly proclaimed him a saint, and the Church has listened to their voices, with the result that the Cause of this holy priest is already well advanced.

Father Charles never conducted a Mission and rarely preached a formal sermon, his work being confined to the daily tasks of a priest ministering to the people of one locality. In his case, however, ordinary priestly occupations became an apostolate. It is estimated that an average of three hundred people came to him—for a blessing or Confession—every day for nearly thirty years, and that not one day passed without witnessing to his remarkable powers. The number of miraculous cures wrought through his mediation is overwhelming. Accounts of these marvels have been preserved, as have details of his daily life as a religious; and if his miracles speak of high spirituality, his life in the cloister tells of the common humanity he shared with his brethren. Occasionally he would be heard murmuring in a tone of self-reproach: "Poor old Charlie," when a

Father Salvian, who had been commissioned to observe Father Charles closely, would extend his watching brief into the self-imposed task of scolding and humiliating. He must be pardoned for the pain he caused his victim in view of his proving to be a semi-lunatic. Trials and crosses tended to turn Father Charles into the saintly man he became. His life-story is edifying throughout; an encouragement and an inspiration to all priests whose daily work for souls is hidden with Christ in God.

*Irish Pilgrimage.* By D. D. C. Pochin Mould, B.Sc., Ph.D. Pp. x + 153. (Gill & Son, Dublin. 16s.)

THAT journey with a purpose, a religious objective, which we call pilgrimage, is a way man has trodden from the beginning of his history. It always appealed strongly to Celtic Ireland, where pilgrimage has had a vital place in the nation's piety from the days of its Apostle. The spirit of the pilgrim was nurtured by the growth and expansion of the monasteries, whose life was to some degree shared in by the people who from time to time visited the ground made holy as the habitation of monks and nuns, taking part for a few days in the liturgical worship of the cloistered communities. The oratories and tombs of the saints likewise attracted pious disciples, the passing of time hallowing such places through striking answers to prayer and manifestations of the miraculous.

The author of this valuable survey of Ireland's Holy Places is a convert from Anglicanism. She is by no means over-credulous, and never allows her enthusiasm to lead her into exaggeration, but although she writes with caution and restraint, her book is throughout extremely interesting. For every ten pages of text there is an illustration. Some of the pictures are of surprising beauty, notably that of the Moone Cross (Co. Kildare) with its magnificent carving, and the photograph of the noble statue of St Molaise at Inismurray. With Mrs. Mould as our guide we not only visit Ireland's shrines, but we also meet Ireland's people; and in the twofold experience we get a true picture of the land's religious history.

L. T. H.

*The Ordination of Exempt Religious.* By Maur J. Dlouhy, O.S.B. Pp. 146. (The Catholic University of America Press. Canon Law Studies, n. 271. \$2.00 unbound.)

THE object of this doctoral dissertation is to present, explain and co-ordinate the canon law of the Latin Church concerning the ordination of exempt religious. Since their ordination is regulated,

in most respects, by the law common to ordinations in general, the author concentrates his attention on the disciplinary features in which the ordination of exempt religious differs from the general norm. He explains these, first, in respect of the candidate, then as they affect the religious superior who selects and trains him and issues dimissorial letters for his ordination, then as they concern the ordinary minister and the ordination itself; and he concludes with a study of the penal sanctions whereby this special discipline is enforced. If the author's style is a trifle involved and sometimes odd, e.g. "the chronological age of the candidate", his arguments seem sound enough and his conclusions sober and reliable.

L. L. McR.

*Ancient Devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.* By Carthusian Monks of the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. With a Preface by Dom Benedict Wallis, Prior of Parkminster. Pp. 232. (Burns Oates. 7s. 6d.)

THE fourth edition of this devotional work, introduced by the present Prior of Parkminster, proves its popularity with the faithful. The devotion revealed to St Margaret Mary is often thought to be a novelty, or at least altogether unheard of before her time. Books such as these show that the opposite is the case, and that it was a devotion known and practised by the Carthusian Order, as well as by many other contemplatives in the Middle Ages. We are given in this edition, together with sundry small prints in the text, a frontispiece of the key stone of a cloister arch at the Grande Chartreuse dating from 1474: it represents a cross rising out of a tomb with the instruments of the Passion of Christ surrounding it, and its centre is a heart pierced by a lance, probably the oldest known representation of the Sacred Heart of our Lord in existence.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

### ORGANIC TRANSPLANTATION

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, 1956, XLI, p. 164)

Father J. Sullivan writes:

The *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* of 1954 lists in its bibliography (page 581) an article of Father Bender, O.P., on organic transplantation published in the *Angelicum* of the same year. It is

Father Bender's opinion that "abscissio quae est mutilatio licite fieri nunquam potest, ne ad transplantandum quidem membrum in corpus alius personae".

Father Zalba, S.J., briefly touches on the subject on pages 267-8 of the second volume of the Regatillo-Zalba *Moral Theology* in the B.A.C. series. He holds that Pius XI condemned this type of operation in *Casti Connubii*. In arguing the case, he appears to be indebted to Pius XII, whose allocution of September 1952 he refers to in a footnote. He states the argument, based on the moral union among members of the human race or on the mystic union among members of the Church, in favour of the liceity of the operation, and questions its validity: membership of the human race, membership of the Body of Christ confers no right to dispose of the parts of our body for the use and benefit of other men, of other members of the Church. A human being never belongs to a moral person in the way in which organ or limb belongs to the physical person.

It might be objected against Father Zalba that Pius XI in *Casti Connubii* and Pius XII in his allocution of 1952 were not directly dealing with our problem and that neither of them, in so many words, forbids the free disposal of parts of the body for the sake and health of others. Let the objection stand. But it should be noted that in the second section of his 1952 allocution the Pope teaches that the progress of medical science does not justify a patient who of his own free will and choice allows experiments upon himself which entail mutilation. Moreover, in an allocution of 30 September 1954 (cf. *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, July 1955, pp. 421-2) the Pope goes a step further and asserts that neither doctor, nor nurse, nor anyone else, sick or healthy, may lend himself to a practical experiment for the benefit of an invalid if the experiment may, according to authoritative opinion, entail mutilation. The Pope goes on to assure his hearers that there can be no doubt about the excellence of the personal motives of those who lend themselves to such experiments, but he affirms that "the issue here is ultimately one of disposing of a non-personal good, without having the right to do so". The "finis operantis" is good: "ex objecto seu ex fine operis", the experiment is immoral. And let not the term "experiment" mislead us, as though it were the uncertainty of the outcome which made it illicit. The Pope, as he let us know in his 1952 allocution, is laying down a principle which applies whether the successful result of the experiment be possible, probable, or certain.

According to traditional teaching, a man may not mutilate his body or destroy any of its functions except to save his own life or to safeguard his own health: or, to put it positively, it is permissible



to mutilate whenever the mutilation benefits the whole body in destroying a part of it. The right to mutilate derives from the right to protect one's life and health by reasonable means; and, in turn, that right stems from the incommunicability of the person. It would be an injustice to impede a person in the exercise of the right, and a person would be acting in excess of his rights were he to mutilate himself for the benefit of another. The traditional teaching developed in terms of justice and right: the neighbour is another person, a separate being, for justice is always *ad alterum*; it deals with persons in their separateness from one another. The opinion which would permit mutilation for the benefit of others seems to be framed in terms of charity: the neighbour is another self, and "we may do for the neighbour that which, in similar circumstances, we may do for ourselves". The opinion cannot mean that we possess an innate right in justice to do for the neighbour what we may do in justice for ourselves, for natural justice regards the neighbour as another and separate person, never as another self. Nor can the opinion mean that the needs of the neighbour confer rights in justice upon us or extend natural rights: the works of mercy are exercises of the virtue of charity: charity respects existing rights, it does not create them. Does the opinion mean that whereas I possess a natural right to submit to mutilation on my own behalf, it is charity which permits it on behalf of the neighbour? But that reduces self-mutilation to an act indifferent in itself which must be made morally good by its motive or other circumstances.

The problem may be examined from the point of view of the principle of the double effect. You may mutilate or submit to mutilation whenever the "*finis operis*" produces its good effect with equal immediacy as its bad effect, provided that the mutilation in removing a part of the body removes what is harmful to the whole body. Now the first stage in organic transplantation is a mutilation which seems incapable of justification by the principle of the double effect. Its only "*finis operis*" is the bad effect, the loss of whatever part of his body the donor yields up. There is no compensating good intrinsic to the mutilation, no good effect of equal immediacy with the bad effect: rather, through the evil the good is attained. Motive seems to be brought in to justify what is *ex objecto* bad.

Of the six authors Dr McReavy cites as willing to grant at least an external probability to the opinion which allows mutilation for the purposes of organic transplantation, I find that only one of them, Father J. Geraud, certainly published his opinion after the three allocutions of the Pope. The other five would all appear to have made up their minds on the problem before the first of the

Pope's allocutions. Though the book of Father G. Kelly, S.J., bears the date 1955, the *imprimatur*, according to my copy of the book, was granted in 1951 (cf. p. 228) or at latest on 4 September 1952 (cf. p. 305), ten days before the first of these important pronouncements of the Pope. Have any of the five authors modified their opinion since the Pope spoke?

On the particular problem of corneal transplantation, Dr McReavy says in a footnote that according to information given him, the donor's own mutilated cornea may grow again. If that proves to be true, I would agree that there is no mutilation in the traditional sense of the term. There remains the larger problem of organic transplantation which entails mutilation in the traditional sense of the term.

#### THE ORGANIST AT LITURGICAL OFFICES

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, 1956, XLI, p. 256)

Dom Gregory Murray writes:

Some readers of the correspondence in THE CLERGY REVIEW, April, p. 256, have asked me if I would be more explicit in defending my view that the organist at liturgical offices is certainly not obliged to utter or mutter any of the words.

The moral theologians, of course, approach the problem from the point of view of the vast majority of the clergy today, who seldom participate in the choral office and are therefore under the obligation of saying (privately) all the words of the office. But although this is the more usual case of those bound to the office in modern times, in one sense it cannot be regarded as normal, for the original obligation was of a different nature. Historically and fundamentally the office was, and is, designed to be performed (not merely said) *choraliter* as a public act—as it still is in Benedictine and other religious houses today. Those who are present at such public performance satisfy their obligation by their personal contribution to that performance, each in his own capacity: no one is then obliged to say all the words. The celebrant does not have to say *Amen* to his collect, nor answer his own versicles; if a psalm is sung alternately by two choirs, the singers fulfil their obligation without uttering all the words; if a lesson is read, only the reader has to say the words. So, too, I would argue, all who act in any official capacity which contributes to the worthy performance of the office, satisfy their obligation. It is only outside choir, in private, that the obligation to

say all the words really holds. The organist therefore satisfies his obligation without uttering a syllable.

Doctor McReavy writes:

Dom Gregory's argument has considerable weight and, as I indicated in my reply, my personal preference is for the view which he supports. Since, however, readers are presumably more interested in theological opinion than in my personal preferences, I felt it necessary to call attention to the fact (which surprised me as much as Dom Gregory when I first discovered it) that the weight of theological opinion is to the contrary.

### THE DIALOGUE MASS

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, 1956, XLI, p. 206)

Canon Burrett writes:

May I make one comment on the excellent practical article by Father Clifford Howell on the Dialogue Mass? He points out that the rubrics of the Missal direct the celebrant to say the words "*Orate, Fratres*" *voce aliquantulum elevata*, and rightly deduces that originally these words were not intended to be heard except by those near the altar. In the "*Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus*", however, the rubric reads: "*Orate, fratres*, celebrans clara et elevata voce dicit; responsum vero dabunt ministri sacri, vel ministrantes, seu circumstantes."

It would seem that, although at present this rubric applies only to six days in the year, there is a change in the mind of the Church on this matter, and that a similar rubric may well replace the former one for the whole year, in any future revision of the Missal.

Is it correct to interpret the word "circumstantes" as the Sacred Ministers and Altar staff? The rubric of the "*Ordo H.S.I.*" seems to contradistinguish between Ministers and servers on the one hand, and "circumstantes" on the other.

May it not be that "circumstantes" has the same meaning as in the "*Memento vivorum*", where surely it means all present? I submit that it is very apt from the liturgical point of view that *all*, and not only a few servers, pray that "*meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat etc.*", and that from the rubrical standpoint it is, at least in Holy Week, the correct thing.

From the practical angle, I fully agree with Father Howell that it is a tongue-twister for the average person, and there is a lot to be

said for the omission of this part in a dialogue Mass with a general congregation. However, I see no reason why a congregation of religious or students, or even the small and well practised weekday congregation, should not say the "Suscipiat". Their cue to start is the same as the server's, i.e. when the priest has fully turned back to the altar.

### *CIRCUMDATA VARIETATE*

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, 1956, XLI, pp. 88, 255)

Canon Handford writes:

Like the rest of us, Dr Fortescue had his little affectations. He hated lace, and his words to the sacristan were no doubt spoken for effect. To take them seriously would require an immeasurable simplicity of heart. There was a much-respected Benedictine priest in Cardiff afflicted with the same anti-lace complex. When a lace-trimmed cotta was put out for his use, off would come the lace!

May I respectfully assure Abbot Taylor that to raise an eyebrow on the score of "pudor" would need an allergic condition of mind unshared by any other priest of my acquaintance?

### LOW MASS FILM-STRIP

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, 1955, XL, p. 717)

Father John Gillick, S.J., writes:

In his most informative article in the December (1955) number on "Film-strips in Religious Education" Father Pickering unfortunately mentioned that a film-strip on Low Mass might be obtained from the Carlton Hill Film Studios. These studios only print the film for me, and have grown weary of answering enquiries about it. May I inform your readers that it can be obtained only from me at Beaumont College, Old Windsor?

### PERMISSU SUPERIORUM

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